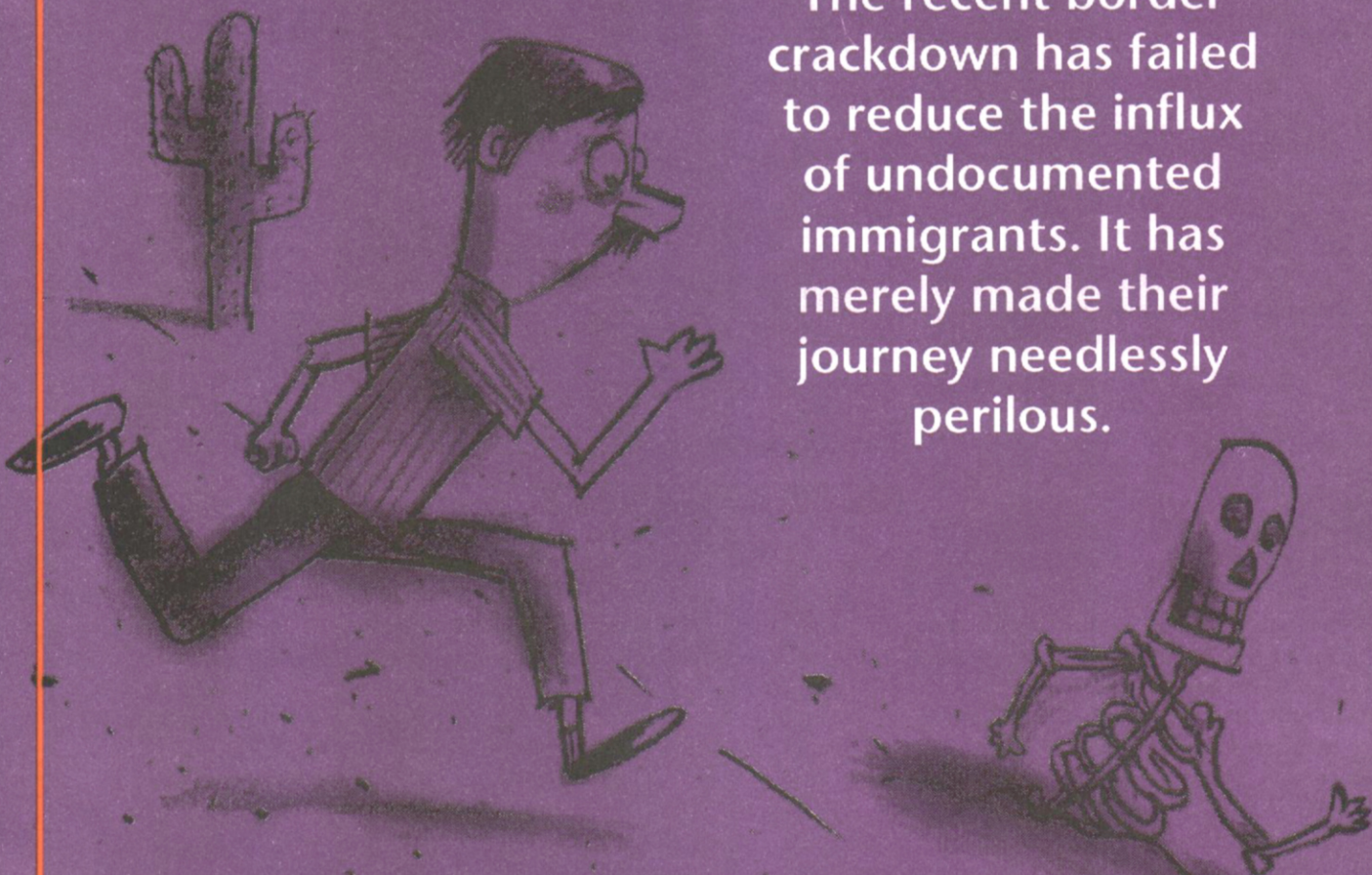


NUCLEAR WASTRELS: DEFENSE CONTRACTORS CLEAN UP
September 16-29, 1996

IN THESE TIMES

Dangerous crossing

The recent border crackdown has failed to reduce the influx of undocumented immigrants. It has merely made their journey needlessly perilous.



\$2.50/CANADA \$3.00



Debbie Nathan
reports

EDITORIAL

PABLUM FOR THE PEOPLE

In the fable of the emperor's new clothes, it takes an innocent child to exclaim that the king is parading about naked. After the Democratic National Convention, that youngster's political counterpart made a similar observation. Both parties, noted Dan Quayle, focused on personalities because they feared a substantive discussion of the underlying issues confronting American society. "To some extent, our convention was the same way," Quayle told the *New York Times*. "Don't answer hard questions. Be soft. Be fluffy. Get up there and do the feel-good stuff. But avoid the tough questions."

The Republican convention was bad enough. Doing their best to disguise the party's nature from the American people—and to present Bob Dole as an "aw shucks" guy just trying to bring back the good old days before small town America was devastated by corporate incursions—Republican consultants concocted three days of bad TV and revived an already failed tax plan. It didn't work. By the time the Democrats gathered in Chicago, Dole had already lost his bounce in the polls.

Smelling victory, the Democrats then put on a soap opera of their own. Like the Republican convention, the Chicago event was a massive rally in which real politics rarely intruded. The major exception came early when Jesse Jackson movingly explained his differences with Clinton, as well as the reasons why working people, especially African-Americans, should vote for the president anyway. Jackson reminded his audience that no president acts boldly on his own. Franklin D. Roosevelt, he said, campaigned as a conservative in 1932, but was forced to move sharply to the left by mobilized working people suffering through the Great Depression. That gave us the New Deal. Similarly, Jackson said, Lyndon Johnson was impelled by the force of the civil rights movement to push through his Great Society legislation in the mid-'60s. Clinton, he suggested, is equally susceptible to political pressure. And with him in office and an

increasingly vocal electorate, anything is possible, while a Dole presidency would be a certain disaster for working people.

After Jackson, it was all downhill. Mario Cuomo, who followed immediately, has always been stronger on style than substance, and that night the fire was gone. After Cuomo, with the exception of Victor Morales, the Texas schoolteacher who is running as an underdog against Sen. Phil Gramm, and Harvey Gantt, who is trying once again to unseat Sen. Jesse Helms, it was all cheerleading or tearjerking. Christopher Reeve, lying in a state-of-the-art wheelchair, started the tears flowing. Al Gore spoke in excruciating detail about his sister's death from lung cancer,

which, he said, finally led him to stop growing tobacco on his farm. Hillary repositioned herself as a family woman. And Bill Clinton talked about his brother's encounter with drugs, and then pointed to the recovered addict with his wife and son on the convention floor.

In short, serious discussion was tabled. Of course, there was talk about economic insecurity, crime, education and welfare, but it was at best superficial, and at worst disingenuous. Clinton began his speech by saying that, for four years now, "we have pursued a simple but profound strategy: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a strong united American community." Then he took credit for everything he saw as good that has happened in those years:

- The increased minimum wage, never mentioned during his first two years, when Democrats controlled Congress, but passed by Republicans and liberal Democrats this year.
- The line-item veto, a terrible idea that further concentrates power in the execu-

tive branch.

- The welfare reform bill, which was presented as a great opportunity for poor people to find work, but which cuts them loose without providing help in doing so.

- The three-strikes-you're-out law, which has already come under attack as capricious and blatantly unfair to minorities and the poor.

- The escalation under the leadership of Gen. Barry McCaffrey of the war on drugs, a war that was lost long ago and is a colossal waste of money that could be used to combat the conditions that spawn drug use.

Like an astrology column, the speech had something for everyone. If you wanted to believe, you could take comfort from what you agreed with—and ignore what you disagreed with. Since the delegates very much wanted to believe, the speech worked in the hall, as it probably did for many in the TV audience. But the whole affair contributed to the continuing infantilization of the American electorate. ◀

Like the daily horoscope, Clinton's speech had something for everyone, but no clear direction.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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InTHESETIMES

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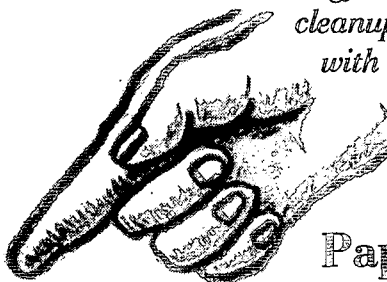
The recent INS crackdown has not made the border less porous, but it is needlessly endangering lives.

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LETTERS

A shameful silence

Karen Robert's review of *The Flight: Confessions of an Argentine Dirty Warrior* (August 19) is timely for several reasons. The issues of government-sponsored torture, the concealed identities of the perpetrators, and the one person who told the truth all speak directly to the United States at this moment.

The Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB) report to which Lisa Haugaard refers in "Admissions and omissions" (July 22) acknowledges that CIA agents and their superiors have been complicit in torture and murder. However, the report's authors explicitly oppose identifying these people. Thus, torturers working for the U.S. government have been given informal amnesty with no public discussion and not a word of protest from a single national political figure.

This is especially noteworthy since there is a U.S. witness to at least some

of what was done. Celerino Castillo III, a former DEA agent in Guatemala, is telling all who will listen what he saw, what he knows, and the case file and DEA computer numbers where supporting evidence may be found. He has challenged Congress to subpoena CIA and DEA agents (something the IOB did not do). Put us all under oath, he says, and let the truth come out. It appears that Congress does not want to know.

The IOB report is absolutely clear on one point: Insiders who know about U.S. government involvement in torture and murder must not tell the rest of us. If they are concerned about the brutal acts of government employees, they are to "raise grievances ... either through the executive branch to the National Security Adviser or the president, or through the congressional oversight committees to the congressional leadership."

In short, people are to go to agencies and personnel who have condoned

and concealed torture and murder in the past, and ask them to reveal their own complicity in such activity. Argentine generals could not have written a better policy.

Is there no one in public life in this country who believes our involvement in torture and murder is so morally reprehensible that the truth must be told? No one at all? In the meantime, Celerino Castillo assumes enormous risks by speaking out about it, and Dianna Ortiz and Jennifer Harbury continue to struggle to get others to do the same. These three private citizens put our public leaders to shame.

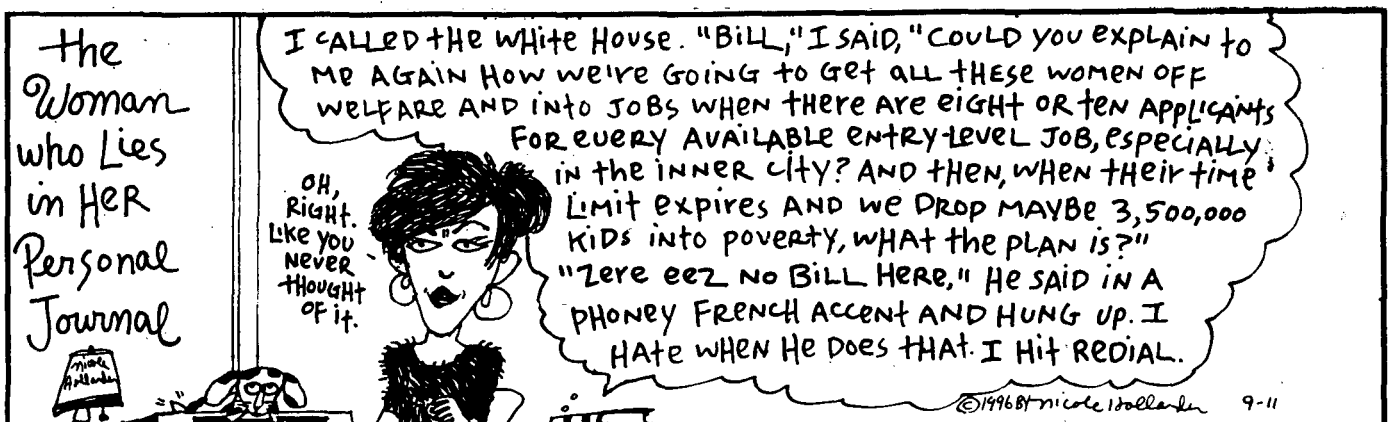
Harold Nelson
Edinburg, Texas

Stadium gambits

Joanna Cagan and Neil deMause's "The great stadium swindle" (August 19) was good and timely, but it left some interesting questions unanswered. Although I don't care diddly for pro sports, my blood boils at the thought of Rudy Giuliani genuflecting before the likes of George Steinbrenner with my tax dollars. I wonder if anyone has investigated the possibility of a city using its power of eminent domain to seize the name of a team on behalf of its citizens? I realize the team is the property of its owner and that the league might lay claim to the name, but surely there must be some legal basis upon which a city could prevent an owner from either threatening to take a sports franchise else-

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



where, or actually relocating the franchise. I hope that some bright law student or graduate might gain some well-deserved visibility by looking into the case law and taking this matter up as a pro bono project.

Larry Racies
New York City

Sports welfare

In "The great stadium swindle," Joanna Cagan and Neil deMause ask "Why, in the face of the huge costs and questionable economic benefits, are local politicians willing to bend over backwards to surrender public money for new stadiums?"

Well, just stop and consider the consequences. Above all else, taxpayer-funded stadiums provide a means for organizing socially created wealth (i.e., tax dollars, in the present case) for the sake of transferring it upwards to the beneficiaries of the sports industry—the franchise owners, the players and their agents, the corporate media that cover them, and the corporate sponsors that use the product to hawk their wares.

In other words, taxpayer-funded stadiums have been remarkably successful mechanisms for depleting social capital while hastening the erosion of the public sphere. And in a social order being dispatched to hell in a handbasket, what self-respecting politicians wouldn't want to throw at least some of their eggs on board for the ride?

For all intents and purposes, the sports cartels have become massive welfare queens. One recent estimate pegged the total cost to U.S. taxpayers of the new stadiums relentlessly demanded by the cartels at \$11 billion over the course of the current decade (give or take a couple billion, no doubt). Thus, taxpayer-funded stadiums are bright and shining examples of what we might call ALDC—Aid to Leagues with Dependent Capitalists. Nor would I hold my breath waiting for the welfare demolishers in the Republican and Democratic parties to get around to doing anything construc-

tive about it. Their hands are already full with the slender necks of teenage mothers.

David Peterson
Evergreen Park, Ill

that virtually all kindergarten teachers are women), their own moms, and girls—were seen as the adversary. The minds of fundamentalist Christian men are saturated with the idea that



Promise Keeper misogyny

In Frederick Clarkson's recent article on the Promise Keepers ("Righteous brothers," August 5), not enough was stated about the group's aim to dominate women.

An article on the Promise Keepers in the last issue of *Focus on the Family* proved very enlightening on this subject. James Dobson, one of the leading fundamentalist leaders in the country, puts out the magazine. Stu Weber, the article's author, spoke of how men need to find a buddy to help them in Promise Keepers. The author started by recounting his "plight" on his first day of kindergarten. "It wasn't just the tense teachers and emotional moms that got to me," Weber writes. "There were lines. Mats. Desks. Rules. Orders. Explanations. And girls—more girls than I'd ever seen in one place." He went on to tell how terrifying it was, but that he found a friend (a boy, of course) and they "huddled together like two lost puppies."

Women—teachers (I would bet

woman in the form of Eve was the cause of all their problems and the reason for their alienation from God. Therefore, they automatically attribute their woes and stress to women. Following that logic, they must get the upper hand and put the little woman back in "her place" under their thumb again.

All this Promise Keeper stuff isn't about sexual responsibility to wives, as they claim, but rather about male control, power and domination, and is devastating to the advancement of women's equality. By making women—the women in their own lives—the enemy, there is no way this movement can be good for half the population.

Marie Micheletti
Tremont, Ill.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

InSHORT



DAYS OF RAGE DOWN UNDER

Canberra, the federal capital of Australia, is a pretty dull town. A place of long empty boulevards and ring roads, with a Parliament House built bunker-style into the side of a hill, it

has the torpor and calm characteristic of most planned cities. It's the last place on earth you'd expect a riot. So it came as quite a shock in mid-August when a large group of protesters,

angry at proposed budget cuts, invaded the foyer of the Parliament, breaking down doors, climbing in through windows and air vents, and staging a pitched battle with police as they attempted to reach the parliamentary chambers. They even trashed and looted the gift shop. It was the first significant public unrest the capital had seen in years. The press was full of the usual tut-tuttings and censure, but many observers also expressed a measure of surprise that Australia's hitherto low-temperature political culture could suddenly erupt in an explosion of rage and militancy at its very center.

The "riot" occurred two days after the new right-wing Liberal-National government of Prime Minister John Howard, called the "Coalition," delivered its first budget, which made savage financial cuts to a number of programs, including low-cost higher education and job-creation schemes. Worse still were measures contained in the proposed Workplace Relations Bill, which would significantly undercut the bargaining power of unions and set back by decades relatively progressive industrial relations.

Australian trade unions have long had a degree of power and influence that labor in other countries could only dream of. For nearly a century, Australian labor relations have been based on a system of state-enforced arbitration, in which special courts set wage and work-condition standards for all industries. Individual and even

workplace collective bargaining is minimal, and industry-wide closed shops are permitted. When the Australian Labor Party (ALP) came to power in 1983, after being in opposition for 31 of the previous 34 years, the union movement further consolidated its political power by negotiating an income policy, called the Accord,

Peddling F-16s

LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES SPEND LESS ON DEFENSE THAN NATIONS IN ANY OTHER PART OF the world. While some see that as a good thing, others see it as a marketing opportunity. After months of internal debate, the U.S. government is preparing to lift its ban on the sale of jet fighters, missiles and other advanced weapons to Latin America. Senior officials say they are giving the green light because of the consolidation of democracy in the region. That's half the story at best. The new policy is almost identical to one proposed by a defense industry advisory group in April 1995. The industry has long been piqued that U.S. arms manufacturers are losing deals to foreign competition. "No one thinks there is a cornucopia in Latin America," said Joel Johnson, international vice president of the Aerospace Industries Association, which represents major defense contractors. "On the other hand, in today's environment, there's no sale you wouldn't like to have, and one gets irritable when you see our own backyard preserved as a European game park." —Deidre McFadyen

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APPALL-O-METER

THE IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES



By David Futrelle

On the beat 4.5

Eager to vanquish once and for all their reputation as wanton head-bashers, the Chicago police treated demonstrators gingerly during this year's Democratic National Convention. But some old-timers apparently still feel a bit of nostalgia for the days of '68. According to the *Washington Post*, one local merchant has made a mint selling T-shirts reading: "Chicago Police: We kicked your father's ass in 1968 ... Wait till you see what we'll do to you." According to the *Post*, police have been "among the most avid buyers" of the T-shirts.

Of course, the protests this year didn't quite live up to the protests in 1968. One group, an outgrowth of the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce called Wake Up America, was only able to garner the attention of one spectator at its scheduled 8 a.m. protest—and that one spectator was *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter Steve Rubenstein. Nine police officers stood guard as the rally's speakers invited Rubenstein to join their

crusade against teen smoking and Social Security cut-backs. All movements start small, speaker Tim Jackson told his audience of one, "but when our movement catches on, we'll look back at the people like you who were with us at the beginning." For their part, the police officers never doubted their ability to deal with the crowd, such as it was. "You seem fairly docile," one officer told Rubenstein. "I don't anticipate any problem from you."

Killer smile 9.3

The last time Yigal Amir appeared on the Appall-O-Meter, the convicted assassin of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was looking for a wife. He may not have much trouble finding one: According to a report in the *Chicago Tribune*, a sort of fan club for the assassin has sprung up among

right-wing teenage girls in Israel, several of whom "attended Amir's trial like rock 'n' roll groupies, wrote



him fan letters in jail, put his picture on their walls and glorified his murder of Rabin as an act of patriotism." In a television interview, one of the girls recalled a treasured moment at Amir's trial. "He smiled at me," she gushed. "I love him. He has this wide smile—a sweet smile—very attractive. I have his picture on my wall."

People person 3.2

Taking a stand, sort of, against the cultural conservatives in his party, Bob Dole seems to have embraced a mild form of multiculturalism. At least we think he has. "Jack Kemp is certainly reaching out to black communities," Dole told the *New York Times*, explaining his philosophy. "I've tried over the years. Hispanics. So I'm very optimistic. I feel good. I'm confident. Sleep good. Work hard. I mean, I like to work. I like to campaign. I like people. I was out there the other night with flash-lights."

Appall-O-Meter Scale:

1. Ricki Lake Effect
2. Waterworldly
3. CK Be Bad
4. Tesh-esque
5. Lulla-Bayh boring
6. Suharto heartless
7. Limbaugh low
8. Ralph Reed-icious
9. Morris Dicked
10. Unabombastic

that gave it a negotiating role in setting across-the-board wage raises for all workers.

Many in the labor movement now see the Accord as a disastrous error. It yoked the movement to the ALP's free-market orientation, in effect forcing it to endorse a remorseless erosion of real wages year after year. Meanwhile, labor's paramount body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), forced a number of shotgun

weddings between trade-based unions, forming 20 or so "super unions."

The effect of all this was to alienate workers from their unions, and to deprive the labor movement of the sense of solidarity necessary for opposition and struggle. The Coalition government has taken advantage of this weakness. New legislation would preserve the arbitration commission as a shell but promote individual contracts between worker and boss, ban the

closed shop, restrict picketing and make it almost impossible for organizers to visit workplaces.

The ACTU has responded by organizing a nationwide campaign of non-violent protest, but its credibility within the union movement has suffered due to its past political spinelessness. Militant unionists are currently taking the first steps toward rethinking strategy for a union movement that is now a smaller player among a range of social movements (among the Canberra demonstrators were Aboriginal activists angry at the new government's return to paternalistic and reactionary policies that minimize the importance of Aboriginal self-determination). They are also trying to develop a politics that views these setbacks as opportunities to find a more universal and collective basis for progressive social change.

—Guy Rundle

DANCING WITH A DICTATOR

Until recently, Illinois Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun walked a fine line on Nigeria. Though she was one of only two members of the Congressional Black Caucus to oppose sanctions on the West African nation for human rights violations, she has worked hard to avoid the appearance of being an uncritical supporter of the country's military regime. But her recent trip to Nigeria crossed the line. She is now widely perceived as an apologist for the regime of Gen. Sani Abacha, which has been described by Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck as conducting a "reign of terror."

Testifying against a Senate sanctions bill in May, Moseley-Braun chose her words carefully. She did not dispute the "propriety" of condemning Nigeria for human rights violations, "the most notable being the Saro-Wiwa execution, the detention of elected officials, and the failure to protect minority rights."

But, she argued, sanctions are unlikely to oust Abacha. Moreover, punishing Nigeria would be inconsistent with lenient U.S. treatment of, say, China. Instead of sanctions, she called for "engagement" and "dialogue."

Most human rights organizations and African-American officials disagreed with her view. "Without the imposition of international sanctions," argued TransAfrica's Randall Robinson, "the Nigerian government has no reason to relinquish power." But at least some praised it as thoughtful and responsible. To Adonis Hoffman, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment, Moseley-Braun's position on Nigeria made her a "statesman."

Her private trip to Nigeria in August, on the other hand, has found few if any defenders. Before going, she did not notify her chief of staff, Edith Wilson, or the State Department. Upon her return, press accounts suggested that she had cozied up to a dictator, that Wilson had resigned in protest, and that the State Department was unhappy that she had bypassed the customary congressional briefing. Moseley-Braun responded that Wilson was planning to leave anyway. As for the trip, she explained it variously as a private vacation and an exercise of senatorial diplomacy.

If the latter, it was at best not very

artful. During her visit, Moseley-Braun met with Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi and told him that as the "only American of African descent in the U.S. Senate," she felt a responsibility "to see to it that U.S. policy is formulated based on facts and not fiction." What kinds of facts and fiction did she have in mind? During their meeting, Ikimi told Moseley-Braun that "it is not true that Nigeria is a country where people are being killed."

This statement came only nine months after Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni political prisoners were executed, and only two months after Mrs. Kudirat Abiola, wife of the imprisoned winner of Nigeria's last presidential elections, was assassinated in suspicious circumstances. Yet if Moseley-Braun made any effort to distance herself from the statement, it was not reported.

The senator also met with Abacha and his wife, whom she apparently knew from several prior visits to Nigeria. She later explained that she wanted to console Mrs. Abacha about her son's death earlier this year. But, according to *Newsweek*, a pro-regime Nigerian newspaper reported that the senator "commended the role of the first lady in the support and promotion of family values and the general improvement of

the welfare of Nigerian families."

Did Moseley-Braun really make this statement, which sounds more like public support for the Abacha regime than a private expression of sympathy for a friend? In her many published explanations since returning home, she has not disavowed it.

Nor, while in Nigeria, did she voice any reported criticism of the regime's human rights record, or meet with such opposition groups as the Campaign for Democracy or the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights. Anthony Omotosho, head of the Chicago-based group Nigerians for Democracy, objected that Moseley-Braun was supporting a "drug-dealing, murderous regime."

If the trip was an embarrassment as diplomacy, it was a public-relations disaster for Moseley-Braun. One journalist accused her of being under the "Svengali-like influence" of her former fiancé and campaign manager, Kgosi Matthews, once a registered lobbyist for Nigeria. Others have implied that her trip was paid for by Nigeria or was illegally funded.

But these allegations—which have yet to be proven—are side issues. The real lesson of Moseley-Braun's misjudgments is that diplomacy is a delicate business. Dialogue with a dictator too easily slips into an embrace.

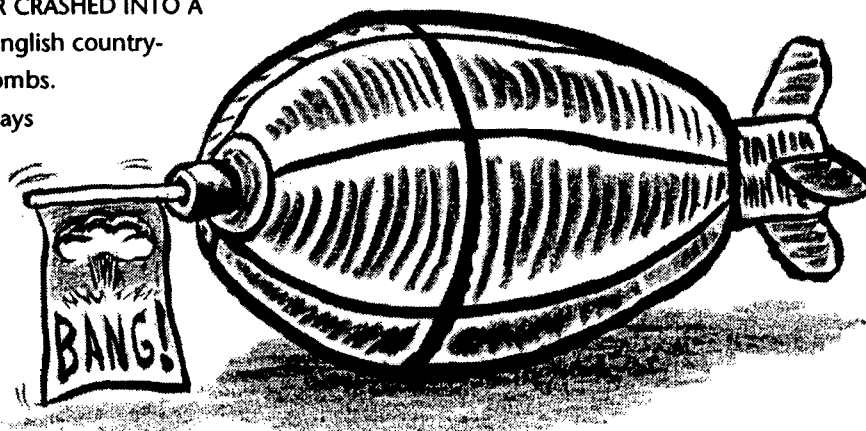
—Doug Cassel

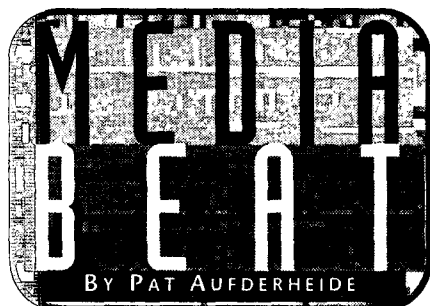
A brush with nuclear disaster

FORTY YEARS AGO, A B-47 AIRCRAFT BOMBER CRASHED INTO A nuclear weapons store in Lakenheath in the English countryside, setting on fire three Mark Six nuclear bombs.

"Preliminary exam by bomb disposal officer says a miracle one Mark Six with exposed detonators sheared didn't go," said Gen. James Walsh, the commanding officer of the U.S. Seventh Air Division, in a private cable to his superior in Washington. At the time of the crash and again in 1979, when the story first emerged in the press, the Pentagon denied that nuclear weapons were damaged or that civilians were ever at risk. The Washington-

based National Resource Defense Council uncovered the declassified documents, including the smoking-gun cable, in the U.S. Library of Congress last year. The papers prove the occurrence of a near-disaster on English soil—and the U.S. government's scandalous initial cover-up. —D.McF.





Beeppers with a catch

In the 1950s, science fiction writer Philip Dick imagined a world in which mosquito-like agents would buzz your ear and whisper advertisements or dunning notices. As usual, he was depressingly prescient. Pepsi-co is already marketing a version of Dick's little nightmare: beepers that bring their very own advertisements. Thirsty Mountain Dew addicts who mail in proofs-of-purchase of the sugar-and-caffeine delivery system along with \$35 get a beeper with free airtime. (They can learn all about it at Mountain Dew's Extreme Network Web site, an online club that's really one big commercial.) The only drawback: Every few days one of those beeps will be a call from Pepsi-co, offering a commercial from one of 24 advertisers (including Subway, K2 Inline Skates and Foot Action) that want to reach Mountain Dew's target audience, young men.

Dinosaur power

In the age of the Internet, aren't broadcasters dinosaurs? After all, they've lost more than a third of their traditional viewers to cable, video, computers and the great outdoors. All true, but they're still some of the most important players in mass media. In the first quarter of 1996, *Advertising Age* reports, spending by advertisers for network TV rose more than 12 percent—at a time when the overall increase in ad spending was only a little more than 5 percent. (Web advertising is still too small even to be on the charts.) That makes sense, at least in the short run. "Free TV" may have lost a third of its traditional market, but it still reaches more

eyeballs at any one time than any other medium. Those network ad revenues are a healthy reminder of broadcasters' profitability, at a time when they are gnashing their teeth at the cost of providing educational kids' programs and begging the FCC to give them free spectrum space.

Don't confuse me with the facts

One of the peculiarities of the *Wall Street Journal* has long been the ugly divorce between its news—an uneven mix of brilliant investigative features and carefully transcribed press releases—and its fulminating (but influential) editorial pages. Now the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the nation's premier press journal, has done an investigation of the editorial page run by editor Robert Bartley. Writer Trudy Lieberman (a *Consumer Reports* senior investigative editor)

tracked down dozens of disputed editorial assertions over the last few years. The paper was guilty of unfounded personal attacks, innuendo and flat-out errors and took a casual, at best, attitude toward corrections. And the errors had a political payoff. For instance, *Journal* editorials helped scuttle the confirmations of Democratic judicial nominees Bruce Greer (judged guilty by unproven and, in fact, erroneous associations) and Peter Edelman (falsely accused of furloughing a rapist—which he didn't even have the power to do). Meanwhile, the editorial page lashed out against the "liberal shock troops of the D.C. bar" for supposedly disciplining Elliott Abrams, the Reagan-era official implicated in the Iran-contra scandal—committing at least three factual errors in the process. Bartley wisely refused to comment on the *CJR* study, so we'll never know if he's sorry.
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TOMORROW'S NEWS TONIGHT

By Steve Brodner



Clinton convention redefines "baby boom"; thousands of welfare kids are dropped from ceiling.

THE NADERING OF THE GREENS

Sandwiched between the major party spectacles in San Diego and Chicago, Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate for president, arrived in Los Angeles for the party's national convention to deliver a civics lesson. "Underneath all our social and economic problems and abuses and injustices rests the quality of our democracy," he told 350 delegates and supporters during a sprawling two-and-a-half-hour speech. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats, he continued, have focused on "the central contention of politics ... the distribution of power in a democracy."

Nader reluctantly entered the race to help the Greens mount a challenge to what he calls "the two-party duopoly." The purpose of his campaign, Nader insisted, "is not to defeat Clinton. The greatest influence the voters can have over the two parties is ... to deny [both parties] their vote and aggregate it behind another party or candidate that's on the ballot. There is no limit to the illogic of just simply choosing between the bad and the worse. We have to break the mold, and try to encourage the political system to have a choice between the good and the better."

Nader and the Green Party—the fledgling cousin of the European electoral parties that sprang to life out of the environmental and anti-nuclear movements of the early '80s—will appear on about 30 state ballots in November. Winona LaDuke, a Native American political advocate from Minnesota, will be his running mate. Nader promises to spend no more than \$5,000, the maximum allowable amount before the campaign would be forced to comply with feder-



The Nicaraguan connection

WE MAY HAVE THOSE RIGHT-WING DARLINGS OF THE '80S, THE NICARAGUAN contras, to thank for the crack epidemic ravaging American cities. In a recent three-part series in the *San Jose Mercury News*, staff writer Gary Webb details how a network of contras started selling cocaine in California in the early '80s to finance their war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Teaming up with a local drug dealer, the Nicaraguans funneled tons of cut-rate cocaine into South-Central Los Angeles, where it was sold as crack. The Nicaraguans then used the proceeds from the sales, according to the court testimony of Danilo Blandon, the network's point man in California, to fund their CIA-backed army, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN).

It's unclear to what extent U.S. government officials were aware of or involved in the drug ring, but Blandon suggests that he and his partners had at least tacit approval. Webb interviewed one DEA agent in El Salvador who investigated rumors that cocaine was being flown from El Salvador's Ilopango Air Base to destinations—possibly U.S. Air Force bases—in the United States. The agent, Celerino Castillo III, began documenting cocaine flights and sending the information to agency headquarters in Washington. As a result, Castillo found himself the subject of an internal investigation. "Basically, the bottom line is it was a covert operation and they [DEA officials] were covering it up," Castillo told Webb. More information is available at the *Mercury News* Web site, www.sjmercury.com/drugs/. —Dave Mulcahey

al election-reporting laws. Instead, he says, he will use the "free media" and travel briefly to a number of states.

Nader's non-campaign campaign places his ostensible party in a bind.

Since he refuses to campaign—declining even to endorse the Green platform or candidates—the struggling party will have to do it for him. Nader insists that his campaign isn't about the smorgasbord of daily issues: What passes for politics—from welfare reform to gay rights—matters little, he says, if democracy isn't reinvigorated. That leaves the Greens dangling. Yet Nader is their only real draw.

Over the course of the four-day "Green Gathering" that led up to the national nominating convention on August 19, not a single prominent environmental leader attended. David Brower, the dean of environmental advocacy and one of those responsible for drafting Nader, was as close as the party came to having a heavy hitter

present. But because the gathering's organizers forgot to send someone to pick him up at the airport, Brower never got to deliver his keynote speech.

"We are the Not-Ready-For-Prime-Time Party," Daniel Solnit, a party strategist, confessed. "We don't have the skills and the money, but we do have the vision and the heart to go forward."

Others take a less charitable view of the campaign. At a time when 60 percent of the American electorate say they are interested in third parties, the alliance of a scarecrow party and a platonic candidate may squander a rare opportunity for the left, says Madison, Wis. *Capital Times* editorial writer John Nichols, a close observer of the campaign. The 1996 race has "three neoconservatives," Nichols says. "And then you have one of the best voices of the left running a bad campaign. Nader alone doesn't look bad; he makes the left look like a joke."

If Nader gets serious, Nichols believes, he might earn a lectern at the presidential debates—and have a shot at changing the complexion of the presidential race.

—Greg Goldin

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STANDOFF IN CYPRUS

Violence flared on the Green Line in Cyprus in mid-August as Greek Cypriot demonstrators twice forced their way into the buffer zone separating the Greek-dominated area of the island from the Turkish-occupied zone to the north. In the ensuing confrontation, two were killed and scores were injured, including U.N. personnel.

There is plenty of blame to go around for these tragic events. The greatest share goes to the Turkish side, for its use of excessive force and for its role in the 22 years of stalemate over an intercommunal settlement. Greek Cypriot authorities are also to blame for failing to grasp the obvious early on—that any entry into the buffer zone would provoke the Turkish side. Many Greek Cypriots criticized their government's handling of the situation.

But a major share of the blame should be laid on the shoulders of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, particularly the United States. In the 22 years since Turkey invaded Cyprus, seizing and occupying 37 percent of the island, the Security Council has done little more than pass resolutions. The closest it has come to putting pressure on Turkey to redress its violation of Cypriot sovereignty is a December 1992 resolution blaming the Turkish side for the stalemate.

The 1992 resolution backed proposals, called the Set of Ideas, which would grant the Turkish Cypriots (who comprise 18 percent of the population) substantial power in a federal government as well as autonomy in 28 percent of the country's territory. Turkish Cypriot opposition parties favor the proposals, but the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash, has refused to accept them. The Turkish side also rejected confidence-building measures backed by the Security Council, which offered a face-saving opportunity for the withdrawal of half of Turkey's 35,000 troops in return for a reduction in military spending by the Cyprus government.

Neither Turkey nor its Cypriot surrogates are likely to work toward compromise as long as the Turkish government remains such a steady customer for U.S. arms. Turkey was the second largest U.S. military client in 1995, importing arms worth \$2.2 billion. Turkey's strategic regional position—always considered to be more important than Greece's—also accounts for the United States' and other NATO powers' indulgent attitude toward the Turks.

Cyprus will remain a problem and a threat to stability in the eastern Mediterranean until the United States and the U.N. give priority to ending foreign interference. Demilitarization was first proposed in a U.N. report in 1965, and the Cyprus government has demanded it in recent years. Demilitarization, and the anticipated entry of Cyprus into the European Union, should enhance prospects for an internal solution.

Some trust had been built up between the two communities through recent efforts to promote communication and reconciliation. Cypriots on both sides of the Green Line as well as foreign governments, including the United States, all backed these contacts. Recent events disrupted the efforts, but they are likely to resume. They offer the best hope for good relations—and the only guarantee for security for both communities.

—A. Rice

SOURCES

Guy Rundle is an editor with the Arena Group, which publishes *Arena Magazine*, a bimonthly review of left political, social and cultural debate, and *Arena Journal*, a biannual publication of critical social theory. Both are available from Arena, P.O. Box 18, North Carlton 3054, Australia. Doug Cassel is executive director of DePaul University's International Human Rights Law Institute in Chicago. Greg Goldin writes for the *L.A. Weekly*. A. Rice is a writer based in the Washington, D.C. area.

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan



I M M I G R A T I O N

Dangerous crossings

Two chronically hungry men I'll call Ernesto and Raúl live in El Paso in cars, or sometimes alleys. It depends on what's available when they cross illegally from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, just across the international border. Ernesto peddles roasted pumpkin seed snacks in El Paso bars and restaurants. Raúl does construction work. I bought them breakfast once and got the details.

Ernesto used to make a decent living teaching karate in Mexico City, but that was before the 1985 earthquake that buried thousands of people under piles of rubble. While Ernesto was helping dig out victims, part of a building fell on him and he was left blind. Bereft of work or disability benefits, he moved to Juárez to survive, and made friends with Raúl, who was already there. Eventually life got so hard in Mexico that they started crossing

Aggressive new border enforcement has not deterred illegal immigration, but it has led to increased suffering and hardship.

By Debbie Nathan

into the United States illegally every day to make a living.

Aggressive new border enforcement threw a wrench in that routine. In late 1993, the U.S. Border Patrol initiated Operation Blockade (later renamed Hold the Line), which lined up 400 agents—100 yards apart—on the Rio Grande River in El Paso 24 hours a day. Until the blockade, evading the Border Patrol had been sufficiently easy that anyone with gumption could make it to El Paso almost every day. Immediately afterwards, crossing was next to impossible.

After a while, though, Ernesto and Raúl figured things out. Now, in the dark before dawn, they travel to the blockade's perimeter in the hilly New Mexico desert beyond El Paso. Raúl guides Ernesto like a Seeing Eye dog, and the two hitch rides or catch a bus several miles back to town. The seven-hour trip is too long to make daily, so they do it once a week. Both have homes in Juárez and would much prefer to sleep in their own beds. But instead, Ernesto and Raúl spend several

days in El Paso working—and several nights homeless.

The local Border Patrol knows about people like Ernesto and Raúl, and publicly acknowledges that more of them are breaking through Hold the Line than when the operation first started. Border Patrol officials in San Diego, however, have apparently not been so honest. Several congressional panels and the Patrol's parent agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), are investigating accusations that administrators of the San Diego-area border-sealing project, Operation Gatekeeper, cooked the books to make Gatekeeper look more effective.

In a Catch-22, increased border enforcement should logically net more migrants, yet the INS is under pressure to show that the number of people making the crossing is down. Since the immigrant flow is traditionally calculated based on the number of apprehensions of migrants, the agency needs to show fewer arrests. Border Patrol union officials say supervisors ordered thousands of undocumented immigrants back to Mexico without counting them. The union also says Gatekeeper administrators have purged records of complaints by agents overwhelmed in areas the INS claims are under control.

These are damning accusations, especially since Operation Gatekeeper is the federal government's latest showcase border-enforcement project. The INS launched the \$46 million operation with fanfare in late 1994, shortly before the off-year state and national elections that included Republican Pete Wilson's successful re-election bid for California governor. Reflecting the growing wave of xenophobia throughout the country, Wilson and many other GOP politicians made anti-immigration policy, such as California's Proposition 187, the centerpiece of their campaigns.

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Anxious Democratic pols responded not by defending immigrant rights, but by toeing the line. They were led by Bill Clinton, who promised to get tough on our southern border. While other government agencies are being trimmed, the Border Patrol's budget has swelled to \$585 million—up 80 percent from only four years ago—and the number of authorized Border Patrol agents has increased 27 percent in the last two years. Clinton's 1994 crackdown focused on the border near San Diego, where more undocumented migrants are arrested than at any other place on the U.S.-Mexico frontier. Seven hundred new agents have been assigned to the San Diego sector alone.

Operation Gatekeeper agents line up in three layers a half-mile to two miles from the border. They are backed by a 14-mile corrugated steel wall, floodlights, night-vision equipment, helicopters, highway checkpoints and the California National Guard, which occasionally marches in platoon-size formations and routinely conducts surveillance.

The consequence of all this force is the "balloon effect." When you squeeze a balloon in one place, it expands in another. The INS is squeezing undocumented immigrants from easy crossing spots into more desolate, difficult areas where they are easier to catch. The pressure has worked to some extent. In the flat, urbanized western end of the Border Patrol's San Diego sector, arrests have declined 40 percent since Operation Gatekeeper began. Conversely, in the remote eastern part of the county, apprehensions have

exploded by as much as 1,700 percent.

Many people have been pushed from California entirely. In Nogales, Naco, Douglas and Tucson, Ariz., Gatekeeper backup operations have produced arrest rates that top previous levels by as much as 600 percent. Farther east, the New Mexico desert just west of El Paso has seen an elevenfold increase since the early days of Operation Hold the Line.

The risk of injuries, even death, has swelled for people pushed into hostile territory. Scalding by day, freezing at night and infested with venomous snakes, eastern San Diego County is so treacherous that the forestry department's local fire-prevention chief hesitates to send his own workers into the area. Last year, five people were found dead in the region, amid the ashes of a forest fire. This summer, two more were discovered, including a woman who collapsed and died after her son went for help. All told, at least 14 Mexicans have perished in similar circumstances in California this year.

The balloon effect has also encouraged high-speed car chases in California, like the one that culminated in the notorious Riverside County beating incident in April. Since then, other similar escape attempts have ended in four fatal accidents, leaving at least 10 people dead and 39 injured. Meanwhile, in the Arizona desert, 10 migrants have perished this

The Border Patrol apprehends two migrants at Cotulla in south Texas.

March on Washington

"Coordinadora 96," the first-ever pro-immigrant march on Washington, is scheduled for October 12 at the Lincoln Memorial. Participants will protest escalating xenophobia and assert that today's immigrants have as much claim on the country as anyone born here. Initiated two years ago by Mexican-American activists in the Southwest, Coordinadora 96 has since picked up support from Central American, Caribbean, Asian American, church, labor and civil rights groups throughout the country. Organizers are hoping for hundreds of thousands of marchers.

To join up, phone: (212) 505-0001; (312) 563-0002; (713) 926-2799; (213) 268-8472; or e-mail: 96SeraDC@u.washington.edu.

year. Near El Paso, overland crossing deaths are rare, but drownings in the Rio Grande are endemic.

As Ernesto and Raúl demonstrate, the redirection of migrants to more difficult crossing spots is not the only reason for swelling arrest numbers. When you squeeze a balloon, you move air to other places; the squeezed place, however, still pushes back. This seems to be what's happening up and down the border. Arrests nationwide are rising: According to early 1996 figures, for instance, INS agents apprehended 25 percent more undocumented immigrants than during the same period a year earlier. All the hot border spots are seeing increases. Even San Diego is up 1 percent since Operation Gatekeeper started.

For the INS, the problem has been most irksome in Imperial Beach, Gatekeeper's westernmost sector. Before the book-cooking allegations surfaced, Border Patrol reports were claiming that undocumented migrant arrests in Imperial Beach were down 65 percent this year compared with pre-Gatekeeper days. That was before the July issue of *Harper's* published an agent's complaint that he and his co-workers were being ordered not to apprehend migrants in Imperial Beach. "Don't catch 'em," they were told, because "if we go over 200 [arrests] in a 24-hour period, the chief gets a call." That call (with accompanying threats) would come from INS Commissioner Doris Meissner, who was getting her calls from Attorney General Janet Reno.

Some congressional Republicans accuse the INS of trying to help Bill Clinton's re-election bid by making it look like he is controlling immigration. The irony is that even the most staunchly anti-immigrant Republican president would find it next to impossible to stem the tide across the southern border. Stick more Border Patrol agents on the line and you're bound to catch more people. But according to many demographers, beefed-up enforcement is not the only reason arrests are up. The expansion of minimum-wage jobs in the United States coupled with Mexico's severe economic crisis—set off by the peso devaluation of December 1994—appear to be intensifying the flow of poor migrants.

Poverty and bleak economic prospects have always driven Mexicans to El Norte, but the collapse of the Mexican economy has greatly intensified the pressure. The Clinton administration's massive bailout loan package has mainly benefited big investors, corporations and the financial mar-

kets. Using the loans as a carrot, Clinton and the IMF forced the Mexican government to implement severe austerity measures that sent the domestic economy into a deep funk, from which it has yet to recover. In 1995, the country's gross domestic product dropped almost 7 percent, the sharpest contraction in six decades. Some 1 million jobs have been lost, leaving 75 percent of Mexican families living under the official poverty line. With NAFTA's ongoing modernization of the countryside, campesinos are being forced off their land and into cities with astronomical

unemployment rates. Most people lucky enough to still have jobs earn less than \$6 per day.

Over breakfast, Raúl and Ernesto described migrants who had died trying to make the crossing and shook their heads. "We're not considered human anymore," said Raúl. Ernesto blindly aimed his fork, sometimes spearing food and sometimes air. In a fit of despair, the two launched into a fundamentalist recitation about the millennium: the Four Horsemen, the Seven Seals and abstruse numerology from the Book of Revelations. "End time," they said, and I wondered whose figures were more deluded: theirs, or the Border Patrol's?

Debbie Nathan is an El Paso-based writer and the author of *Women and Other Aliens: Essays from the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Cinco Puntos Press).



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E NVIRONMENT

Nuclear wastrels

Despite talk of reform, the Department of Energy is still awarding contracts for nuclear waste cleanup to defense companies with track records of fraud and abuse.

By David Madison

The nuclear bomb factories and research facilities where the United States set the pace for the Cold War arms race are now being cleaned up and closed down. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), it will cost at least \$230 billion over the next 40 to 75 years to clean up the waste buried in pits and stored in tanks at these sites.

This Herculean task has set off a new race, as military giants like Lockheed Martin and Westinghouse, following federal budget dollars, have jumped into the waste management business. These defense contractors are now competing with big engineering firms like Fluor Daniel for a chance to handle the refuse.

The federal government built nuclear bombs, missiles and submarines for more than 40 years without worrying about what to do with all the waste. High-level and potentially volatile

atomic soups are now stored in tanks that could explode, while radioactive leftovers stashed in trenches have contaminated ground water supplies and nearby rivers. At the Hanford site in Richland, Wash., liquid waste must be constantly monitored and tested while scientists search for a safe way to transform the liquid and reduce the threat of explosion. And at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL), near Idaho Falls, material tainted with plutonium is stored in barrels and landfills as it awaits the opening of some "permanent" waste depository.

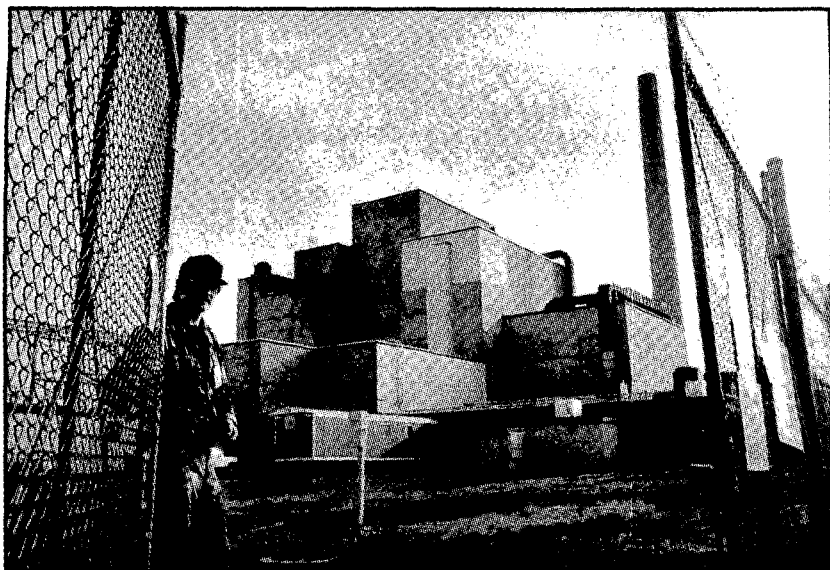
In 1988, DOE finally began to tackle some of these problems, shelling out billion-dollar contracts for nuclear cleanup. Since then, however, there's been little progress. The department's program increasingly appears to have been a boondoggle from the start: While turning a blind eye to waste, fraud and abuse, DOE allowed big contractors to set prices, cover expenses and withdraw money directly from the federal treasury with almost no DOE oversight. These

contractors turned a handsome profit while paying only minimal attention to quality. Industry watchdogs and government auditors have documented in detail how these firms were essentially given a blank check for botched jobs at big nuclear waste dumps. Between 1989 and 1994, DOE poured \$7.5 billion into this program without cleaning up a single major radioactive mess.

"DOE paid [companies] for simply showing up. Not anymore," says Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, who took office in 1993 promising a raft of contract reforms. This summer, O'Leary announced a new 10-year national plan aimed at cutting costs, increasing oversight, cleaning up waste and shutting down operations at certain DOE sites by 2006. The department's top brass are now making stops around the country, drumming up public support for the reforms in an effort to get Congress to fund waste operations well into the next century.

Instead of hiring several big companies working independently at each site, DOE is trying to streamline the system by awarding work to one lead contractor. The department says it is carefully auditing its contractors and using "performance-based contracts" that pay according to the quality of the work done. DOE describes a future where today's government contractors are tomorrow's private waste managers—where nuclear waste, which will remain deadly for thousands of years, is left in private hands.

Despite all its talk of correcting past mistakes, DOE is still awarding contracts to some of the same pirates who defrauded and abused the old system. "The DOE is not in control of its own complex," says Washington, D.C. attorney Bob Roach, who spent a dozen years doing DOE oversight work. "They [DOE] have become the tools of the con-



The Hanford plutonium finishing plant in Richland, Wash.

tractor.” According to Roach, the General Accounting Office (GAO), watchdog groups and even certain DOE officials, daunting cleanup problems remain while a dubious collection of contractors is shuffled around, rehired and trusted with handling the nation’s most dangerous waste.

Consider Westinghouse. The atomic giant responsible for processing uranium for atomic weapons at Hanford in southeast Washington fleeced taxpayers for millions—maybe billions—during its five-year contract to clean up the nuclear mess it had created. In 1994, after a series of investigations by DOE, the GAO and the press, top department officials concluded that Westinghouse wasted one in every three dollars spent on the Hanford cleanup. Another audit conducted by Washington state’s oversight office and released in 1994 found more than a quarter-billion dollars concealed in Westinghouse’s annual overhead costs (the administrative and miscellaneous money needed to maintain operations). In essence, DOE was paying Westinghouse to run in place. The company cashed in on contracts that turned a huge profit but made little progress with the cleanup.

After such probes into Westinghouse’s finances, DOE responded by slashing millions of dollars from the contractor’s budget. As of October 1, DOE will be relieving the company of its duties at the Hanford dump. Westinghouse, however, has not fallen out of DOE’s good-graces. Just as it was firing Westinghouse from the Hanford job, DOE renewed the company’s cleanup contract at the Savannah River waste site, where it milked big defense budgets in the Cold War effort to produce materials for nuclear warheads.

Fluor Daniel, the company DOE recently chose to replace Westinghouse at Hanford, is another participant in the department’s game of musical chairs. At the Fernald nuclear dump in Ohio, where uranium was once processed for use with atomic bombs, government and labor officials say Fluor Daniel often overbilled DOE for shoddy cleanup work. A 1995 GAO report found that DOE contractors charged the federal government 40 percent more for waste studies than contractors employed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Among those contractors, the GAO found Fluor Daniel to be the most expensive, charging 58 percent more on studies than its peers working for the EPA. According to Gerry Pollet of the Seattle-based citizens’ group Heart of America Northwest, the GAO is still actively investigating the company’s financial abuses.

Lockheed Martin, a relatively new player in the nuclear waste business, has a similar profile to Westinghouse and Fluor Daniel. The company has a history of problems with cost overruns and budgetary boondoggles, in addition to allegations of bribery and other dubious dealings with overseas arms customers (see sidebar). Before deciding to give Lockheed its waste contract at INEL, DOE first had to wait for the company to be cleared of charges pending with the Department of Defense.

Now comfortably in control of Idaho’s waste budget, Lockheed Martin is actually being paid by DOE to short-circuit the reform process. When DOE officials came to town to discuss the department’s reform efforts, INEL spokespersons explained how “Lockheed really took the

Lockheed Martin at the public trough

Lockheed Martin was created in 1995 when aircraft giant Lockheed merged with nuclear weapons builder Martin Marietta. Today, the company is the largest defense contractor in the world and a rising star in the world of nuclear waste. In what has been called one of the worst cases of corporate welfare, the government gave the new company about \$850 million to cover its “consolidation costs.”

After the merger, company executives went straight to work using their taxpayer-financed windfall to win more taxpayer-financed contracts. Lockheed Martin built on its base at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL) and moved further into the waste business by joining Fluor Daniel’s team at Hanford. There, the company will handle that site’s most dangerous waste.

Still unblemished by the kind of investigations that have tarred both Fluor Daniel and Westinghouse, Lockheed’s “Mr. Clean” image as a waste manager contrasts starkly with its image as a military contractor.

As British investigative journalist David Boulton relates in his book *The Grease Machine*, former Idaho Sen. Frank Church once described Lockheed’s work as a defense contractor as “a sordid tale of bribery, and of shadowy figures operating behind the scenes.” Church, who investigated Lockheed at length, said the com-

lead" and will help DOE with its "compliance re-engineering." Questioned by Beatrice Brailsford of the Snake River Alliance as to what the department means by "compliance re-engineering," a department official replied, "We have given money to Lockheed to challenge our burdensome regulations." In other words, DOE is paying Lockheed to write its own rules and compliance standards.

It's obviously not a good idea to let the fox guard the hen house, yet this is exactly the situation the DOE reform process is perpetuating. In the four years since Secretary O'Leary launched her contract reform, according to the industry newsletter *Defense Cleanup*, the department has "quietly retreated from perhaps the boldest and arguably one of the most significant reforms—a plan to stop letting nuclear weapons contractors withdraw money directly from the federal treasury without substantive oversight."

DOE defends its policy of giving contractors direct access to government coffers, arguing that it is saving taxpayers' money by avoiding finance fees from private banks. DOE officials also insist the department's new 10-year plan will provide "substantive oversight." So far, however, Hanford is the only site where all expenses must be invoiced and accounted for. And even if Fluor Daniel does own up to all it spends at Hanford, critics of the new reforms say DOE doesn't have the staff to really monitor the operation.

"There's not enough feds in the system," says Richard

Miller of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. "DOE has the largest imbalance of contractors to feds." According to a top DOE official who wished to remain anonymous, "96 percent of the people in environmental management have no training in environmental work."



A glove box for handling plutonium at the Hanford site.

DOE may have a shortage of waste specialists, but it sure doesn't lack spokespersons eager to hype the latest "reforms." When the department's general counsel at the Hanford site describes DOE's "new way of doing business," she sounds exactly like the spokeswoman from Fluor Daniel. Both insist that it's unfair to judge the waste management business by past abuses, and enthuse about how DOE and its contractors make a great team.

Beyond the pep talk, however, neither the contractor nor the department seems able to give concrete assurances that fraud and mismanagement will stop. Under the new reforms, costs are supposed to be "independently validated." When asked what the department means by "independent," DOE spokeswoman Susan Brechbill replied, "That has yet to be determined."

For Lockheed Martin, what passes for oversight seems more like inbred collusion. After all, the DOE administrators initiating this latest round of contract reforms at INEL are some of the same folks who allowed Westinghouse and the engineering company EG&G to grant themselves tax-funded bonuses.

In a 1994 memo to Secretary O'Leary, DOE Inspector General John Layton described how Idaho officials paid out cost-reduction incentives to EG&G, among other companies, without any proof that the contractors were actually saving the government money. Apparently, all contractors had to do to receive a bonus was claim a certain amount of savings.

John Wilcynski is one of the DOE officials who was interviewed by the inspector general's office and is suspected of allowing payment without proof. He now evaluates the new "performance-based" contracts and decides how much to pay contractors. In performance reports from DOE's Idaho office, Lockheed Martin is, unsurprisingly, scoring high marks.

By expanding private industry's role in waste management, the Department

pany's story includes "a cast of characters out of a novel of international intrigue."

If Church were alive today, he might be surprised by the cast of characters Lockheed Martin has managed to assemble in his home state since taking over at INEL. As if shielding itself from the criticism directed at other waste managers, Lockheed Martin has launched a public relations offensive, hiring two of Idaho's most powerful politicians as its spokespersons. Former Gov. Cecil Andrus and former Sen. Jim McClure come from different parties, but they share an intimate knowledge of nuclear waste policy.

These politicians-turned-PR specialists are now part of a Lockheed Martin-backed effort to get a state initiative dealing with nuclear waste tossed off November's ballot. Proposition 3 is an unprecedented attempt to require both legislative and voter review of all future nuclear waste deals made between the state and the federal government.

Lockheed Martin doesn't want anything to happen with the state's current agreement to allow 1,133 waste shipments into Idaho over the next 40 years, so it's put Andrus and McClure—as well as Givens, Pursely & Huntley, the state's most powerful law firm—to work. Federal law, however, specifically prohibits contractors from using contract dollars for lobbying. Lockheed Martin's public relations blitz has been brought to the attention of DOE General Counsel Robert Nordhaus, who has yet to issue an opinion. —D.M.

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VERSO

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of Energy hopes contractors will use government money to set up shop in the communities that depend on waste jobs. At INEL, for example, DOE is currently seeking bids to build a private, mixed-waste treatment facility. Eventually, once INEL and other government dumps are declared to be "decontaminated and decommissioned," DOE believes this kind of private, spin-off business will form part of an alternative economy that will absorb displaced defense industry workers.

Critics in Idaho say such ventures will result in a kind of McWaste drive-through industry where both chemical and radioactive materials will be handled behind closed doors and away from public scrutiny. "It will simply be deregulated and effectively dumped," says Mary Olson of the Washington-based Nuclear Information & Resource Service. "Somebody's just going to say, 'Hey, get rid of this.' It's really a nightmare."

Unlike most longtime DOE officials, who are reprimanding veteran contractors with awards and declaring them reformers for maintaining the status quo, a few in the department are working for real change. With the cooperation of industrial watchdog and environmental groups, these officials could help end business as usual.

Before real reform can occur, however, DOE needs employees with skills and experience that match the agency's new mandate. Since the refocusing of the department's mission away from energy and defense toward waste cleanup in the late '80s, DOE has done little to hire employees with appropriate experience. O'Leary's appointment as secretary of energy in '93 led to some minor staff shake-ups, but the environmental management offices at DOE are still dominated by staffers brought in from the department's defense and nuclear power divisions. This "old guard" at DOE has helped engineer the transition of contractors like Westinghouse and Lockheed Martin from energy and defense jobs into waste management.

"During the past 10 years or more, the United States has developed emerging environmental services and technology," says Jim Werner, who heads a DOE environmental management office in Washington, D.C. "These aren't the aerospace giants. What we need to do is make use of these smaller companies."

The EPA, state environmental agencies and private companies already utilize the services of smaller waste managers that don't have a history of fraud and abuse. In the past decade, some of these firms have grown enough to compete with the likes of Westinghouse and Fluor Daniel. DOE contractors like CH2M Hill, which is currently cleaning up and handling nuclear materials at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in Colorado, started out in the minor leagues with an ecologically minded mission. "That's what they are in business to do," Werner says of CH2M Hill. "Some people are juiced up about what they're doing—that makes all the difference. They also have the mindset of 'Let's get the job done and get out.'"

David Madison is the editor of the *Boise Weekly*.

CONVENTION

The corporate free ride

“I’m Still For Bill,” read one button at the Democratic National Convention. The party’s left grumbled about Clinton’s recent capitulation to Republican welfare reform, but they accepted it with some dismay as a campaign tactic while vowing a fight, in Jesse Jackson’s words, “for jobs and day care and health and education as we ought to know it.” After the beating the party took in 1994, Democrats, even discomfited liberals, desperately want to win. If vacuous unity is the price, they’ll pay it. There will be plenty of opportunity for fights after the election, so the argument goes, when Clinton is safely ensconced in office for a second term.

The Chicago convention was most noteworthy for what it didn’t discuss: corporate power and accountability.

By David Moberg
CHICAGO

Thus the Democrats left Chicago, as the Republicans left San Diego, with many differences papered over. Neither the platform nor Clinton’s acceptance speech presented a grand vision of what the party

stands for. Democrats repeatedly asserted that “it takes a village” to raise children and accomplish other things, positioning themselves as defenders of community and social cooperation against the harsh individualism of the fortress family invoked by the Republicans. It was a welcome but modest ideological riposte.

If the platform and acceptance speech are any clue, Clinton will govern in a second term largely through symbolic gestures and minor tinkering with the tax code—usually one of the less efficient and effective ways of enacting social or economic policy. Most of the new programs Clinton offered in his speech are, at best, hints of a social compact. For example, instead of the traditional Democratic pledge of affordable health care for all, Democrats celebrated the weak Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, which allows workers to carry their health insurance from job to job. Clinton’s proposals pointed to problems—such as the transition from welfare to work, or making college

affordable—more than they offered meaningful answers.

The convention rarely addressed the big problems facing the country, nor did it suggest how to rebuild the Democratic Party as something more lasting than a faulty brake on Republican extremism. Perhaps the Oprahcization of politics, with its incessant invocations of children and family amid the bathos of personal tales, works as a campaign tactic, but it doesn’t restore faith in politics and government, rebuild ailing cities or provide job security. If Democrats want to regain lasting power, they’re going to have to come up with real solutions.

The convention, however, was ultimately more noteworthy for what wasn’t discussed than for what was. Only fleeting references were made to the threats of economic globalization, the burden of military spending, the need for drastic campaign finance reform (the many corporate sponsorships at the convention spoke eloquently to that issue), and the problems of inequality and wage stagnation.

The biggest failure was the Democrats’ refusal to talk about corporate power and responsibility. In polls taken for the AFL-CIO and the Preamble Center for Public Policy, Peter D. Hart Research found that more than two-thirds of all Americans now blame corporate greed for many of the nation’s problems. For example, 46 percent said corporate greed is a bigger obstacle to progress for middle-class families than government waste and inefficiency, while 22 percent said both were equally important.

The Democrats could have staged a dramatic evening by focusing on victims of corporate abuses—workers downsized out of longtime white-collar jobs, displaced when a business went overseas with tax assistance, or exploited in sweatshops. Then as a counterpoint, the party could have showcased a few good employers who cooperate with their

unionized workers. From a narrowly political standpoint, by avoiding the issue of corporate responsibility, Democrats missed an opportunity to focus voters' ire on something other than government.

Two main factions within the party are divided over the issue of corporate power. On one side is the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which defines bureaucratic government as America's gravest problem. The DLC, which Clinton once chaired, is popular among policy wonks, journalists, state and local politicians, and Democratic-leaning businessmen, but has no real base of citizen support. The organization sees a new decentralized information-age economy evolving and celebrates market-oriented solutions, which

ically accountable. With respect to corporations, he argued that the government should close tax loopholes that subsidize companies shipping jobs overseas, and set new rules for the global economy so businesses can't "pole vault over all the victories we've won," such as prohibitions on child labor.

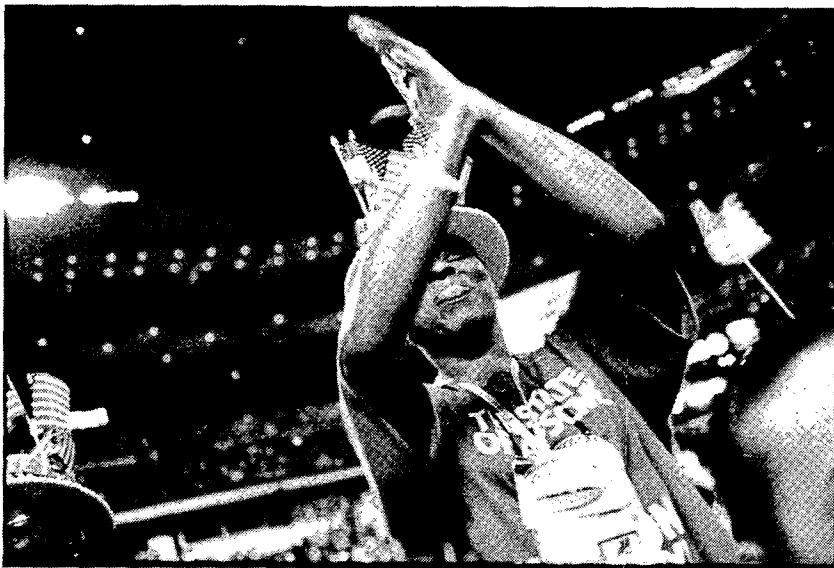
The labor movement had a strong presence at the convention: Union members made up a third of the delegates. Members of the National Education Association were out in force, wearing "Mad and Mobilized" buttons in reference to Dole's swipe at teachers unions in his acceptance speech. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney also addressed the convention (it was the first time that anyone at the AFL-CIO could recall the federation's president having such a prominent role at a convention). But most important, labor's campaign—such as its series of TV ads attacking vulnerable Republicans on Medicare and the minimum wage—has defined the issues in many congressional races so successfully that AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka could claim, "We think we've already won."

Labor is focusing much more this year on issues and downplaying endorsements. This strategy is forcing both Democrats and Republicans to respond to its agenda. In isolated cases, such as West Virginia's state legislative races, unionists have run their own slate in primaries. In some districts, with the long term in mind, the labor movement is building a cadre of union members who will continue to monitor the performance of whoever is elected. "We won't hesitate to go back into the

streets," insisted Gerald McEntee, president of AFSCME (the public employees union) and chair of the AFL-CIO political committee.

When the future of Social Security comes up for discussion in the next term, the DLC will urge the government to dismantle the current system and create in its stead individually managed retirement accounts and a minimalist welfare program. But the government is also likely to hear much more forcefully from troops mobilized by labor and senior citizens' groups. These constituencies want to strengthen the existing system by making some modest adjustments that would preserve and increase its progressive, redistributive quality.

Stuffed with evasive, empty and safe themes, the convention was, in the end, little more than an elaborate campaign event for Clinton. But after November, the problems of the real world will reassert themselves. While many observers speculate about what Bill Clinton wants to do with his second term, the important question for progressives is how to arouse and shape political sentiment to force the president to confront fundamental issues such as the nature of corporate power. In his acceptance speech, Clinton spoke of building a bridge to the future. But the real issue regarding the nation's pathway to the future is who will write the rules of the road.



An AFSCME delegate
at the Democratic
convention.

supposedly permit individuals to adapt more easily to their new insecurity. Most problems with the U.S. economy, the council argues, are the fault of education and job-training programs that fail to adequately develop "human capital." DLC members are not sympathetic to labor unions or even to such bedrock Democratic programs as Social Security.

On the other side of the divide is the rejuvenated labor movement and economic populist politicians who see the balance of power between corporations and ordinary Americans as a central issue. The Campaign for America's Future, a vehicle for these groups, was founded this year as a left alternative to the DLC. The facts are on their side: Despite new competition and apparent decentralization, corporate power in the new global economy is on the rise. The economic populists want to rein in corporate abuses, empower unions and workers on the job, and more tightly regulate the global economy to protect workers and the environment.

"The issue for me is not big government but good government," Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) said at a Campaign for America's Future forum at the convention. Dorgan said Democrats need to make the Federal Reserve more democrat-

B LACK AMERICA

Integrating the big tent?

W

In one of the stranger ironies of the '96 campaign, the GOP is aggressively courting black voters.

By Salim Muwakkil

While the Democrats were rallying their troops in Chicago for a unified march toward November, the opposition team of Bob Dole and Jack Kemp was busy tilling the political soil for new growth, seeking to cultivate black support.

On August 23, the two made an unprecedented visit to the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) convention in Nashville, where they made news and perhaps some new friends. Dole delivered a speech at the convention that many observers insist was one of his best. In his address, the former Kansas senator said that the combat injuries that left him handicapped also made him more sensitive to the sting of discrimination. Echoing the contrition of Christian Coalition Executive Director Ralph Reed, Dole acknowledged that the Republican Party has too often been on the

wrong side of the race question. He also apologized for snubbing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People by declining to speak at the civil rights group's recent convention.

For all his mea culpas, Dole knows that African-American voters are not exactly thrilled with his opponent either. "I can think of few better outcomes of this election—not just for the black community but for all America—than to have Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Bob Dole and Jack Kemp truly competing for the votes of African-Americans," Dole said to strong applause. While many black journalists may disagree with GOP policies, they heartily concurred with Dole's charge that the Democratic Party takes black votes for granted.

With what many in the audience regarded as genuine candor, Dole explained how his views on affirmative action had changed over his 35 years in Congress. "I've supported race-based preferences in the past," he said. "But over time, I realized that preferences created

with the best of intentions were dividing Americans instead of bringing them together." Dole said real affirmative action required vigorous "outreach to give people opportunity to compete" and efforts to topple "barriers to advancement of women and minorities in corporate America."

Many pundits speculate that Dole chose Kemp, former New York congressman and secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for his role as the GOP's main emissary to black America as well as his passion for tax-cut economics. As a former pro quarterback, the quip goes, Kemp has showered with more African-Americans than most white Republicans will ever meet. Moreover, the energetic Kemp has a history of concern for inner-city issues. He has proposed some innovative strategies that later became policy, such as enterprise or empowerment zones and expanded tenant management of public housing. During his years wandering in the wilderness of the Bush administration, he was known for promoting "conservatism with a human face." He tirelessly advanced the notion that a low-tax, high-growth "opportunity society" has more to offer African-Americans than a paternalistic federal government does.

While some housing advocates credit Kemp with keeping the issues of the poor on the public agenda during his HUD tenure, they also agree that he did little to change the Bush administration's housing policies. In a 1992 campaign speech, candidate Clinton criticized the administration for "not passing more of Jack Kemp's housing initiatives to do more for low-income working people, to give them the right to own their own homes and secure their own neighborhoods."

Moreover, the former New York congressman called



into question his commitment to his ideas when he suddenly changed his positions on affirmative action and immigration to harmonize with Dole. The NABJ crowd wouldn't let Kemp get away with that: "After two decades of cultivating your image as a semi-soul brother in the Republican Party, what credibility do you now have with African-American voters after turning your back on affirmative action in a mere space of two days?" asked *Boston Globe* columnist Derrick Jackson during a question-and-answer session at the conference.

Kemp explained that he still believed in the principles underlying affirmative action: "I might abandon an idea, but not an ideal. I can change politically without changing my principles. I am more than satisfied that the Bob Dole vision for America is perfectly in sync with my vision." He said he believed affirmative action programs can be replaced with new initiatives that provide people access to education, jobs, credit and housing.

That may not have been the answer black journalists were looking for, but most agreed the GOP duo handled the questions well. "There was a lot of initial skepticism in the crowd, but Dole and Kemp seemed genuinely interested in connecting with us," the *Globe's* Jackson said in a later interview. "I'm not sure if the two managed to convert anyone, but at least they were willing to try. That in itself is a welcome change for Republicans." If the GOP candidates sustain those outreach efforts, Jackson said, it will benefit the entire political process.

David Bositis, a senior research associate for the Wash-

ington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, concurs. He says that the Republicans can upset Clinton's reelection strategy by making a solid play for the black vote. "The candidates' appearance at the black journalists' convention was something no other Republican had ever done. It was totally unprecedented," he said. "And, in my opinion, it was totally genuine. Both Dole and Kemp are moderate Republicans with solid civil rights records. And Kemp has been a visible pitchman, promoting free-market ideas as inner-city solutions."

If Kemp spends time campaigning in the nation's major cities, the Clinton/Gore campaign

will be obliged to intensify efforts and devote more resources to lure the black vote, a base of support it has taken for granted up to now. Moreover, by demonstrating their desire for black support, Dole and Kemp will attract moderate whites who may incline toward the GOP but were uncomfortable with the party's race-baiting tradition.

"Jack Kemp can go into any city in the country and any corner of any city and make the case for voting Republican," said Sen. Connie Mack (R-FL), who reportedly was on the short list for consideration as Dole's running mate. "With Colin Powell as our featured opening night speaker and Kemp on the ticket, any tinge of us being an exclusionary party is removed."

Dole's choice of Kemp was also designed to please Powell. The retired general introduced the candidates to rousing applause at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Louisville. During the trio's visit, campaign officials openly pushed the story that Powell would be appointed secretary of state in a Dole administration; Powell said nothing to squelch the rumors.

"If Kemp campaigns in inner cities, where he's known and liked, this presidential race could tighten considerably," said Ron Walters, professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland and author of *Black Presidential Politics in America: A Strategic Approach*. If the Republicans can pull enough black votes in the battleground states of New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois—states with significant black populations—they can put those states out of reach of the Democrats. Ross Perot gar-

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nered about 7 percent of the black vote in 1992, Walters adds, and those voters most likely will be up for grabs this year. It's unlikely they will be any more attracted to Clinton than they were in 1992, and Kemp's new face may lure them to the GOP.

To that end, Kemp began campaigning in South-Central Los Angeles during the week of the Democratic convention. In a visit to an area of the community hit hard in the riots of 1992, he promoted "a new civil rights agenda" of tax cuts, enterprise zones, home-buying assistance and scholarships. "This is not the Grand Old Party. It's the Grand Opportunity Party," Kemp told a group of community leaders and neighborhood residents. "It's going to be new. We're going to ask for every vote." Responding to a resident's question, he declared, "We are all brothers and sisters. And there's only one answer for this country on the eve of the 21st century. It is racial reconciliation."

Who would have expected such sentiments from a Republican leadership that just two years ago was stoking the smoldering embers of the "angry white male" vote? With little fanfare, the party has moved a great distance from the contentious national convention of 1992, when Pat Buchanan urged the party faithful to arm themselves for an ongoing "culture war." The goal of racial reconciliation was nowhere to be found in the GOP's infamous "Contract with America," the priorities list putatively responsible for the Republicans' 1994 congressional sweep.

It's unlikely, however, that Dole and Kemp, no matter how well-intentioned, can fundamentally change a party whose very success is based on a strategy of race-baiting. The GOP's current congressional hegemony can be traced directly to Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy," which sought to attract white Southern Democrats disgusted with their party's embrace of the civil rights movement. And today, most of the so-called hot-button issues that move Republican voters—affirmative action, immigration, welfare reform, crime and punishment—have a racial subtext.

Although it touts prominent black members, such as Colin Powell and Rep. J.C. Watts (R-OK), and although it has nominated a racial moderate for vice president, the GOP remains the party of reaction. "They are struggling to put a new face on the Republican Party," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson. "But the party needs a new soul—not a new face."

Still, Kemp's talk of community empowerment and entrepreneurial solutions strikes a chord in many black communities, and even echoes the tune of self-reliance sounded at last October's Million Man March. This shift in Republican campaign strategy will at least force the Clinton/Gore campaign to pay attention to issues African-Americans deem important. Following this season's national conventions, which failed even to acknowledge the accelerating spiral of decay in inner-city America, that may be the best news yet to come out of this political season. ▴

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CHRISTIAN RIGHT

Out on the fringes

B

y the third day of their national convention, the delegates of the U.S. Taxpayers Party (USTP) were in rare form. They were pumped up from two days of fiery far-right oratory—and more than a little arcane conspiracy theory about the Federal Reserve Bank and the United Nations. The party had rented an elegant venue and intended to make the most of it. When a speaker rose to denounce the subjugation of U.S. foreign policy to the dictates of the “New World Order,” he was momentarily drowned out by shouts of “No U.N.! No U.N.!” For the rapidly growing USTP—there were more than 400 delegates present this year, compared with only 139 at the party’s founding convention in 1992—it was the moment of a lifetime.

If one factor could dampen the spirits of the USTP delegates, it was the absence of Pat Buchanan, whom they had expected to lead a mass walkout of delegates from the Republican

National Convention across town. But the hero of pro-life populist conservatism had fallen on his pitchfork for Bob Dole and the Republican Party, and the disappointment was palpable. Practically overnight, Buchanan had gone from Braveheart to Knaveheart among the true believers. Buchanan and other top leaders of the Christian Right (notably James Dobson of Focus on the Family) had publicly flirted with the USTP, weighing the possibility of running on a third-party ticket in order to gain leverage within the GOP. But now the young party was on its own.

The Vienna, Va.-based USTP was founded four years ago by longtime conservative activist Howard Phillips as an outgrowth of the non-profit political group U.S. Taxpayers Association. Dismayed by what he saw as the failure of the Reagan revolution, Phillips hoped to capitalize on the dissatisfactions of other conservatives and revive the old dream

of a political party of the far right.

Hope for a third party springs eternal among conservatives, who often find themselves as frustrated in their alliance with the Republicans as leftists do in theirs with the Democrats. Historically, the most effective rallying cries for this frustration have been racism and regionalism: Strom Thurmond (then a right-wing Democrat) and his States’ Rights Party (the “Dixiecrats”) won more than a million votes on an anti-civil rights platform in 1948, and in 1968 “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever” won George Wallace’s American Independent Party (AIP) almost 10 million votes, or about 15 percent of the national total.

The last serious attempt to create a right-wing third party on the national level came in 1976. A group of conservative leaders who had supported Ronald Reagan against Gerald Ford in the GOP primaries—including direct-mail entrepreneur Richard Viguerie, the Free Congress Foundation’s Paul Weyrich and *National Review* publisher William Rusher, as well as Phillips—sought to detach the right wing of the Republican Party and join it to George Wallace’s AIP. But the deal fell through, and, instead of a third party, the conservative leaders’ efforts produced key institutions of the New Right like the Moral Majority and the National Conservative Political Action Committee, which ultimately were instrumental in helping Reagan win the nomination in 1980.

With Reagan in power, conservatives put their plans for a third party on hold. For a while, it seemed they were finally running the Republican Party, and most of those who had pushed the AIP merger in ’76 became ardent Reagan supporters.

But the Reagan revolution came mainly in the early years of Reagan’s first term. By Reagan’s second term, and especially during the Bush years, many conservatives became profoundly disenchanted with the Republicans. The Bush

They failed to lure Buchanan from the GOP, but the U.S. Taxpayers Party still hopes to play the spoiler in November’s election.

By Frederick Clarkson
SAN DIEGO

administration's enthusiastic participation in international bodies alarmed many nationalists on the right, who regarded the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade as a threat to U.S. sovereignty and the U.N.'s leadership role in the Gulf War as a threat to U.S. military hegemony. Abortion, the defining issue for many social conservatives, was another major disappointment: After 12 years of Supreme Court appointments by publicly pro-life presidents, many on the right believed that *Roe v. Wade* should have been overturned. And the steady advance of gay rights and gender equality in the workplace made a mockery of the "pro-family" views of both movement conservatives and the Republicans in power. As anti-abortion leader George Grant declared at the founding convention of the USTP, "Something funny happened to the pro-family, pro-life movement on the way to victory: We were Bushwhacked."

Sentiments like these on the right are the raw materials out of which Phillips hopes to construct his new party. He has drawn supporters from the AIP, the defunct Populist Party of David Duke, the more militant elements of the Christian Right, Operation Rescue and even the militia movement.

Interestingly, the argument that conservatives got a raw deal from Reagan and Bush also inspired Pat Robertson to found the Christian Coalition, which has pursued a seemingly opposite strategy: It has worked within the GOP, running its own candidates for local offices under the Republican banner, and taking over state party organizations. What appear to be opposing factions in the conservative movement, however, might be better viewed as complementary sides of one strategy. If the Christian Coalition is seeking to position itself as more moderate, the braying hysteria of the USTP should make a helpful contrast. And if the coalition and its allies prefer to take a hard line, they are more likely to win concessions from moderate Republicans if they appear to have a viable third-party alternative. In any case, relations between the two sides of the movement seem to be mostly amicable at the grass-roots level.

So what does the USTP stand for? Its platform calls for eliminating most non-military functions of the federal government, from the Food and Drug Administration to the Federal Election Commission to the Internal Revenue Service. In the USTP view, the United States is a "republic," not a democracy, and is "governed by Constitutional law rooted in Biblical law." Specifically, the party demands that the government cease funding organizations and activities that "contribute to the spread of AIDS by endorsing, implicitly and explicitly, perverse, immoral and unhealthy conduct"; that "the Voting Rights Act ... be repealed"; and that "no state [be] obliged ... to enforce any state law governing mar-

riage and the family which conflicts with the law of the Creator." The USTP would also declare a moratorium on immigration, make English the country's official language, and broaden the Immigration and Naturalization Service's powers to screen and deport immigrants. They also call for immediate withdrawal from the U.N.

Unsurprisingly, the nascent right-wing revolutionaries, like civil libertarians and others on the left, oppose the



erosion of Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure, "including general and unwarranted electronic surveillance, national computer banks, and national identification cards." They reject "claims of necessity to 'combat terrorism' and to 'protect national security' " as justifications for overriding the Fourth and Fifth Amendments.

Speakers at the USTP convention elaborated on these themes in various ways. In the opening session, USTP national chairman Ted Adams' denunciation of Gen. Colin Powell was met with whoops and cheering from the delegates. He characterized Powell's support for affirmative action at the GOP convention as saying "it's OK to exclude some people from opportunities because of their race." He continued, "That's bad enough for a national figure to say something like that, but for 20,000 people to give that kind of thinking a standing ovation, what did they do, check their brains at the door?"

Texas USTP chairman Daniel New called for "an enlistment boycott" of the U.S. armed forces "until we know where we are going to stand with this New World Order." New is the father of former U.S. Army soldier Michael New, who was court-martialed for refusing to wear a United Nations blue beret in Bosnia.

In the keynote speech, Herbert Titus, former dean of the law school at Pat Robertson's Regent University, probably struck the convention's high note in militancy. Titus called for citizens to mobilize "in the streets" and exhorted gov-

ernment officials at all levels to “resist” *Roe v. Wade* as “an illegitimate decision.” He invoked the Second Amendment and the “doctrine of the lower civil magistrate,” a Calvinist precept justifying the overthrow of an unjust government by a more virtuous lower official. Many in the USTP have used the Second Amendment, with its provision for “a well regulated militia,” to defend the full range of militia activities.

Though Buchanan was not there to present his views, Phillips did succeed in lining up a number of Buchanan delegates and other prominent Republicans, most notably former Buchanan campaign co-chairman and Gun Owners of America chief Larry Pratt, and Shelly Uscinski, a prominent Christian Coalition activist and an alternate Buchanan delegate from New Hampshire. Other high-profile Republicans who have crossed the lines include former Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham, who is now the USTP state chairman there; former Idaho GOP state chairman Gene Winchester, who now leads the USTP in that state; Peg Luksik, who ran well in a GOP primary against Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge; and Dr. Herbert London, a dean at New York University and longtime Republican and Conservative Party activist. Many of these ex-Republicans have successfully drawn large numbers of votes in past elections. When asked why conservative Republicans such as Ollie North and Pat Buchanan failed to jump to the USTP, Phillips said they are good conservatives and good friends, but “they have pachyderms running in their blood.”

The USTP has managed to get on the ballot in about 30 states (they hope to reach 42 by the elections) and is running candidates for all levels of government in most states. Phillips, who has claimed the president’s spot on the USTP ticket, expects to draw votes primarily from home schoolers, the anti-abortion movement, gun owners and disgrun-

tled Buchananites. Taking a page from Buchanan, USTP leaders hope that working-class voters will be drawn to the party’s economic nationalism and to its view that “our country and its workers” should be seen as “more than bargaining chips for multinational corporations and international banks.” However, their opposition to labor unions—the convention featured a speaker from the National Right to Work Committee—makes labor defections to the USTP unlikely.

Phillips says that he will not accept any federal money, and has little of his own. He expects to campaign like Buchanan, making heavy use of talk radio. However, the USTP does have an innovative strategy for getting around the federal campaign finance laws. The party is running different candidates for vice president in various states. Some are local Ross Perots who will be able to spend unlimited amounts of money on their own campaigns. One of these is Bob Meucci from Mississippi, who described himself at the convention as “the largest manufacturer of custom-made pool cues in the world.” In other states, the candidate for veep may not be wealthy but is intended to bring in votes as a favorite son. Joe Zdonczyk, the chairman of the Concerned Citizens Party of Connecticut, will be Phillips’ running mate in his home state as well as in Illinois, where he hopes that his Polish surname will win the party some votes in Chicago. In the unlikely event that they win the elections, Herb Titus would be the party’s pick for vice president.

While the USTP has no serious prospect of election to any major office this year, Phillips is threatening to throw resources into states where he thinks the party could affect the outcome. In other words, the USTP doesn’t mind being a spoiler and contributing to Dole’s defeat, as long as it gets the credit for it. In past years, far-right third-party candidates have run mainly to push the GOP further to the right rather than in the hopes of actually winning office themselves. By that standard, the USTP is likely to enjoy considerable success.

Whatever its role in the fall, the USTP seems to have come of age as a dependable electoral vehicle for the Christian Patriot and militia movements, as well as for conservatives tired of the inevitable mainstreaming of their views in the national mega-parties. If third-party movements ever succeed in breaking down the two-party lock on American politics, the USTP is well positioned to occupy the far right in a new multi-party system.

Frederick Clarkson is the author of *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, forthcoming from Common Courage Press.

Who’s who in the USTP

Howard Phillips: Co-founder of both the Moral Majority and the secretive Council for National Policy. Phillips was a leading defender of the apartheid government of South Africa and still deplores the “Communist African National Congress.”

Larry Pratt, conference speaker: Ousted as the Buchanan campaign co-chairman because of his links to white supremacist groups, Pratt is the chief theorist of the militia movement. In a new book, Pratt urges the formation of militias under the authority of county sheriffs “to resist any tyrannical act on the part of the federal government.”

R.J. Rushdoony, convention speaker: The founder of the Christian Reconstructionist movement and a close adviser to Howard Phillips. Rushdoony believes democracy is a “heresy” and calls for the outright implementation of a theocracy and “Biblical Law,” under which adultery, heresy, blasphemy, apostasy and homosexuality would be capital offenses.

Randall Terry, Northeast regional co-chairman: Founder of the militant anti-abortion group Operation Rescue.

Matthew Trehwella, delegate from Wisconsin: The leader of the anti-abortion group Missionaries to the Preborn, Trehwella advocates the formation of church-based militias and declares that “plans of resistance are being made” against the “totalitarian dogs” in Congress. —F.C.



Intellectuals under fire

The downing last February of two Brothers to the Rescue planes—which may or may not have been violating Cuban air space—set in motion a disastrous chain of events. First, in retaliation for the incident, President Clinton signed into law the Helms-Burton Act, a draconian piece of legislation that codifies the embargo against Cuba into U.S. law, attempts to export it to third countries, and gives Congress the right to make any future decision regarding recognition of Cuba. The passage of Helms-Burton, in turn, gave hard-liners within Cuba a more dominant voice in internal affairs.

President Clinton's signing of the Helms-Burton Act gave hard-liners in the Cuban government their chance to crack down on a prestigious social science institute.

By **Carollee Bengelsdorf**
HAVANA

possible. With respect to intellectual matters, the stated intention of these hard-liners is to shut down relations between Cuban scholars on the island who write about the country—not “dissidents,” but intellectuals who are committed to the project of the Cuban revolution—and the so-called “*cubanólogos*,” North American academics who study Cuba.

The most recent offensive against intellectuals began at the University of Havana before the plane incident. Supposedly in reaction to the “Track Two” strategy delineated in the 1992 Torricelli amendment—maintaining the economic embargo, but encouraging cultural exchanges in an effort to undermine the revolution from within—the government replaced the university’s rector and placed severe restrictions on professors’ ability to travel abroad and maintain contact with foreign academics.

The offensive took its strongest form this April when the Central Committee issued a lengthy statement on government policy (Defense Minister Raúl Castro, Fidel’s brother, read it the next day on television), which included an attack on specific research institutes. The Communist Party created 20-odd think tanks in the late ’70s and early ’80s to advise it on foreign affairs and Cuban popular opinion about government policy. When the Cuban economy went into a free fall after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, some of these institutes sought to convert themselves into non-governmental organizations in order to gain funding from abroad for such basic supplies as computers, disks, paper and books. Despite this change in status, they remained advisory institutes to and of the party.

The Central Committee’s attack fell most heavily on the Center for the Study of the Americas (CEA). The government denounced CEA researchers for falling “into the spider web cast by foreign U.S. experts who served the U.S. policy of promoting fifth columnists.” It accused them of being interested primarily in traveling and having their work published abroad. The irony—and the tragedy—of this attack is that in the past six years, CEA has produced some of the most important and serious work on Cuban society. Indeed, by helping outsiders understand developments on the island, CEA’s research has convinced many that a project involving egalitarianism and social justice remains alive at the heart of the Cuban revolution. But CEA’s intended audience was not the outside world; rather, it was those in Cuba involved in defining the terms, identifying the problems, and judging the efficacy of the government’s recent economic and political reforms.

This is not the first time that intellectuals have come under attack during the 37 years of the Cuban revolution. Fidel’s 1961 statement concerning intellectual production—“Within the revolution, everything; outside the revolution,



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nothing”—may have sounded good at the time, but it has made for a stormy relationship between the Cuban government and the island’s intellectual community.

In the 1960s, a time of tremendous ferment and creativity in Cuba, the revolution essentially chose to see its key intellectuals as arms of foreign policy. The government used these intellectuals to mediate the country’s contact with the outside (and particularly the leftist) world. Foreign intellectuals—from Jean-Paul Sartre to K.S. Karol, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar and Régis Debray—ritually visited the Cuban intelligentsia for an explanation of the revolution before going on to meet with top party officials.

In the late ’60s and early ’70s, Cuba was shaken to its foundations by the collapse both of its internal policies—the country’s attempt to forge its own path to socialism, independent of the Soviet Union, through “the simultaneous creation of socialism and communism”—and of its external policies, marked by the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia, where he was trying to foster a wider revolution in South America. The Cuban government adopted a more traditional Marxist-Leninist path to socialism. As it did so, the Ministry of Culture passed into the hands of hard-liners from the army.

For more than a decade thereafter, many Cuban intellectuals withdrew from public life. The immediate catalyst was the infamous and ridiculous Padilla case, which involved a well-known Cuban poet, Heberto Padilla, who was supposedly “jailed” (actually he was forced to spend time in a

beachfront villa) for counterrevolutionary activity, later repented, and finally went into exile in the United States. The attack against Padilla prompted Sartre, Vargas Llosa, Fuentes and other European and Latin American intellectuals to break with the Cuban revolution, charging that the case represented the beginning of Cuba’s Stalinist “purge trials.”

Intellectuals of Padilla’s generation responded to the government crackdown in disparate ways. Some left Cuba. Others threw each other to the dogs: For instance, Padilla, in his 1971 staged and public self-critique, openly criticized fellow intellectuals who he said had “acted like him” in courting Western contact. Still others silently withdrew into the privacy of their homes. The only work of intellectual merit that continued was in film production, thanks to the support and protection of Alfredo Guevara, who was the powerful head of the Cuban film institute, ICAIC, and an old friend of Fidel’s.

The fate of *Pensamiento Crítico*, a journal produced by the students and faculty of the University of Havana’s philosophy department, symbolized the windows that closed in that bleak era. In the late ’60s, *Pensamiento Crítico* had supported the government’s doomed “simultaneous creation” idea but had also sought to introduce Cuban readers to the critically important work of theorists and activists such as Antonio Gramsci and Amílcar Cabral. In 1971, the government disbanded *Pensamiento Crítico*, along with the philosophy department that had put it out. It also shut down all social science departments at Cuban universities

with the exception of economics (which, in the Marxist worldview, is considered a hard science). As a consequence, the younger generation of social scientists that makes up CEA practically all studied literature—many of them French literature—when they attended university during the 1970s.

As the decade drew to a close, the government became more flexible about who could publish, be exhibited or travel abroad. Armando Hart, the culture minister during the '60s, returned to his post in 1976. In intellectual terms, however, the damage had been done. The social sciences did not begin to be rehabilitated as a legitimate arena of study until the mid-'80s, when Cubans began to discuss issues such as the formulaic manner in which children were being taught the island's history.

Toward the end of the '80s, CEA began to do work in the social sciences related to Cuba. Its researchers took encouragement from the 1990 announcement of the Fourth Party Congress, which spoke of the need for open discussions both within and outside the party, and of the importance of the social sciences in that process. Beginning in the early '90s, CEA researchers attended the pathbreaking series of meetings between the Russians, the United States and Cuba concerning the 1962 missile crisis. They conducted fieldwork throughout the island on the effectiveness of the local governmental structures known as Popular Power. And they tried to develop a rational and inclusive body of reforms that would allow Cuba to emerge from its acute economic crisis with its social welfare system intact. This work was published in CEA's journal, *Cuadernos de Nuestra América*, as well as in other articles and books produced by the center's researchers. Thanks in large part to CEA, Cuban social scientists recovered the status in the Latin American intellectual world they had lost in the '70s and '80s. It was for this reason that Latin American intellectuals, such as Eduardo Galeano and Carlos Monsiváis, who have consistently supported the Cuban revolution, publicly and angrily decried the Central Committee's attack on the center.

Some in the leadership (including Raúl himself) have tried to distance themselves from the Central Committee's April statement. Government officials are once again calling CEA researchers committed revolutionaries, not fifth columnists. The reasons for this retreat are multiple and, as always in Cuba, complex and contradictory. One factor has been the support CEA has garnered from the rest of the island's intellectual community. Probably for the first time since 1959, Cuban writers, filmmakers, social scientists, artists and poets have called meetings of their own organizations to reject the Central Committee's dictum. The most dramatic expression of this opposition took place at the funeral of researcher Hugo Azcuy, a member of the older generation of CEA and head of the center's party branch, who died of a heart attack the day after Raúl's television appearance. The funeral prompted a mass gathering of intellectuals—from every field and from across the island—who came to give their condolences and silent support.

The leadership's pull-back also owes much to the courage of CEA researchers themselves. The government fired only the organization's head; no one else left CEA, and all continued to do the work they asserted was their right and responsibility. Since April, commissions from the party have gone around to each of the 20-odd research centers to inquire about their work. In most centers, these sessions have been mild, involving overall review and some minor self-criticism.

The commission that met with CEA staff was larger, and made up of extremely powerful people. According to the rumors swirling around Havana—a city governed by rumors, most of which are correct—CEA researchers were willing to discuss critiques of individual pieces of work but would not discuss the center's mission as a whole. They presented three requests to the commission. First, and most important, they refused to give up their right to do work on Cuba—they are, after all, the Center for the Study of the Americas, and Cuba is part of the Americas. Second, they would not accept as their new director Darío Machado, a party functionary whose credentials as a social scientist would be an embarrassment to any legitimate intellectual institution. Third, they wanted the government to publicly repudiate the way it had characterized their work.

These demands will probably not be met. In the end, the hard-liners will succeed in destroying CEA as it has existed, but they will not be able to produce the silence they crave. A return to the orthodoxy of the 1970s is doomed to failure. The social and economic conditions of contemporary Cuba have evolved, and the process of transition currently under way—it is not yet clear toward what exactly—cannot be stopped by fiat or decree.

Remarkably, despite the obstacles they face, the young Cuban intellectuals at CEA—who were born or came of age with the revolution itself—still believe in the project about which they write. They experienced the recent government action as a stunning blow. After Raúl's speech, there were no parties in Cuba. The only celebration was held in the offices of Radio Martí in Miami.

Carolee Bengelsdorf is a professor of sociology at Hampshire College. She is the author of *The Problem of Democracy in Cuba: Between Vision and Reality* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

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I N T H E A R T S

Friends of the devil

“S

atan has no unemployment problems,” says the sign on one church in West Memphis, Ark. It’s a warning, of course, but in this economically depressed working-class suburb—where many residents undoubtedly *do* have unemployment problems—it could just as well be a recruitment poster. Though Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky entitled their documentary about a grisly crime in this Southern town *Paradise Lost*, its trailer parks, innumerable churches and rows of small, unembellished houses clearly were never much of a paradise.

When three 8-year-old boys were sexually assaulted, mutilated and brutally murdered in West Memphis in May 1993, the police and the local media immediately suspected the hand of Satan or his minions. Three teenage Metallica fans were indicted for the crime solely

on the basis of their interest in the occult. One of them confessed. It was at this point in the story that Berlinger and Sinofsky arrived in Arkansas at the suggestion of their producers at HBO, who thought there might be a film in the case.

Berlinger and Sinofsky went south expecting to make a film about the depravity of youth but wound up with something more complicated. This movie is much tougher to watch than *Brother’s Keeper*, the 1992 film that made the two men famous. That tale of the Ward brothers, elderly and eccentric dairy farmers in upstate New York—one of whom is accused of fratricide, to the disbelief of the surrounding community—had an upside. The Ward brothers were not just weird but wonderful, a prime example of American individualism and even family values. There is nothing but despair and anger in the story *Paradise Lost* tells, and the film itself has an air of numb trauma about it. Once again Berlinger and Sinofsky film with minimal authorial presence. They roam almost anonymously through West Memphis

with their camera, letting the place and the people speak for themselves. They capture moments of wrenching personal revelation, as well as pathetic scenes played for the camera by West Memphis residents who are, even in their grief, visibly grateful to receive this unexpected video benediction.

Berlinger and Sinofsky visit the crime scene—a wooded ravine alongside Interstate 40—and then the homes of the victims. An angry mother, who looks as care-creased and worn as one of the women in Dorothea Lange’s photographs, is seized with a paroxysm of hatred toward the three teenagers. “I hate them,” she spits out, “and *the mothers that bore them.*” A couple of fathers load up their handguns and demonstrate, using pumpkins, how they’d like to blow off the suspects’ heads.



Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills
Directed by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky

A grim documentary looks at a lurid triple murder and hysteria over satanism in a small Southern town.

By Pat Dowell

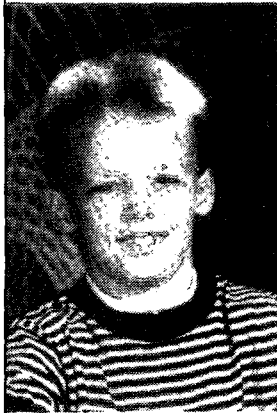
Everywhere Berlinger and Sinofsky go they find the local "reporters" for newspapers and television, who are busy playing up the satanism angle, the teenage suspects' love of Metallica, their interest in the occult, and the fact that the leader of the three chose the name Damien for himself. (At the trial, his lawyers feel compelled to claim he was thinking of the lepers' priest rather than the horror movies about the son of Satan.) The eager reporters dog the parents of all involved; at one point, a vapid on-air talent can be seen sweetly asking one young mother, who is dressed up for her 15 minutes of fame, if she's been contemplating suicide after the grisly violation and killing of her child.

It's the trial that's at the center of the movie, though. Berlinger and Sinofsky's camera captures not only the courtroom but meetings in chambers and legal strategy sessions as well. They do not go so far as to stomp for the teenagers' innocence, but they certainly make a strong case for reasonable doubt. It turns out the police didn't bother to videotape or even take notes of their interrogation of the 17-year-old boy who confessed. He is revealed to have an IQ of 72, and defense experts testify that he is very suggestible. Tried separately first, the boy gets a sentence of life plus 40 years, and then refuses to testify against his friends. The other two, aged 16 and 18, are tried together, in a trial focused almost exclusively on their predilection for the wrong side of religious pop culture.

Like Milton's Satan, who vowed to make a heaven out of hell, these teenagers tried to create their own kind of community—their own moral universe—by inverting the symbols of religious authority surrounding them. In a sense, *Paradise Lost* is a study of how the epic pretensions of its namesake would fare in modern small town America. One of the more dispiriting aspects of the film is that it makes clear how little this attitude of defiance accomplishes, even on its own terms. By the time the camera meets them, the three suspects have been cleaned up by their lawyers, revealing the essentially childish core behind the heavy-metal posturing.

The movie ends with the guilty verdicts, which are being appealed, and directs viewers to a Web site for more information (<http://gothamcity.com/ParadiseLost/>). Damien's appeal will be heard in court in October, when *Paradise Lost* will be playing in theaters (it was shown several times

Steven Branch
Age 8



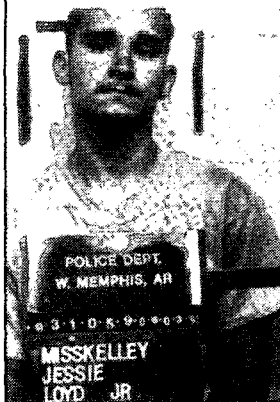
Christopher Byers
Age 8



Michael Moore
Age 8



CAUTION: POLICE LINE - DO NOT CROSS



on HBO this summer).

Paradise Lost is not as tightly focused or as engrossing as *Brother's Keeper*—and it is far grimmer, especially in its unflinching display of police videos and photographs of the naked, ghostly white corpses of the children as they were found in the creek beside the highway. Berlinger and Sinofsky's neutral, unscripted gaze is a valuable corrective to the tabloid penchant for exploiting trauma and tragedy while hypocritically tidying up the horrific details. Even more important is the film's understated challenge to the justice system. In a high-profile case in a low-profile town, the defendants could hardly afford millionaire lawyers to manage the press as well as the trial. The teenagers were found guilty on the basis of little more than their admittedly poor taste in music and fashion, because police and prosecutors—and the story-hungry reporters who are the real ghouls of the story—saw an exploitable angle that would make the citizens of West Memphis sit up and take notice. They did. And now, so should the rest of us. ◀

**Victims and suspects in
Berlinger and Sinofsky's
Paradise Lost.**

I N P R I N T

Women's work

By Phyllis Eckhaus

As the global free market gobbles up and excretes low-wage workers, protections won by working people are disintegrating. In our supposedly civilized United States, workers must compete against their most exploited international counterparts—with dire consequences. At a 1993 conference on low-wage women workers sponsored by the Department of Labor, an advocate reported that piece workers at a Nabisco cracker factory were so hard-pressed that they “chose” to wear diapers rather than take bathroom breaks.

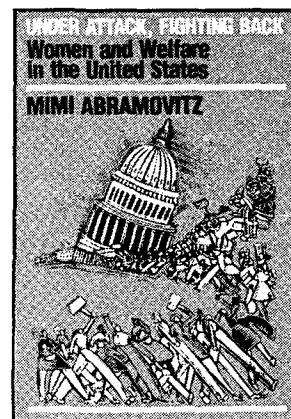
If we had a humane, adequately funded welfare system, would some of these women choose the dole over the crackery factory? One hopes so. Yet as I write this, President Clinton has vowed to keep women in diapers. By signing the “welfare reform” bill and thus removing the tattered remnants of our social safety net, he has put millions of poor people at the mercy of the most avaricious employers. Any work—no matter how degrading, dangerous or poorly paid—is deemed more dignified than taking government support to care for one’s children.

One of the many virtues of *Under Attack, Fighting Back* is the way Mimi Abramovitz links attacks on welfare to businesses’ interest in cheap and exploitable labor. In the ‘40s and ‘50s, the “farm policies” of Southern states deliberately denied benefits to black women in order to force them into the fields during harvest season. Abramovitz cites a Louisiana civic leader who in 1954 bluntly complained that “public assistance results in reducing the unskilled labor ... in employment where women and children form a principal part of the supply.” In the ‘60s, when the gap between welfare grants and the minimum wage began to narrow, Congress passed harsh “work incentive” programs that channeled thousands of AFDC mothers into low-wage jobs and deterred others from even applying for benefits. Abramovitz observes that these programs increased the size of the labor pool, effectively subsidizing low-pay employers by making it possible for them to attract workers without raising wages.

Though the book was published in March, before the passage this summer of welfare reform, it remains up to date. Abramovitz, a professor of social work at the City University of New York, wrote this extraordinarily lucid and useful volume to educate and motivate welfare advocates. In compact sections, she describes current and historical attacks on welfare, offers gender-sensitive theories of the welfare state, and provides an overview of underpublicized welfare advocacy.

Her account shows how welfare has been recast from a public investment in children to the most scorned example of big government’s largesse toward the undeserving poor. When the federal government first implemented payments to poor mothers during the Depression, widows were one of the main categories of beneficiaries. Welfare was only one of several “entitlements”—benefits not linked to the annual federal budget process—contained in the 1935 Social Security Act, which also included Old Age Insurance (now known as Social Security) and Unemployment Insurance. In 1939, when Old Age Insurance was expanded to cover widows and children, welfare was transformed into the stigmatized domain of divorced and unwed mothers, as well as widowed black women whose husbands had not earned enough to qualify for the more generous Social Security benefits. Welfare became the only entitlement that subjected recipients to morals tests; if home visits revealed signs of a male presence or questionable child-rearing practices, mothers were denied benefits.

Abramovitz argues that attacks on welfare directly threaten all women, not just the poor. Welfare reform, she says, serves as a “launching pad” for assaults on other social programs that give women support in their caretaking roles. When policy-makers condemn welfare as a waste of taxpayer dollars, other government-funded health, education, childcare and social service programs become vulnerable to the same harsh budget-cutting frenzy. Punitive and puritanical new welfare policies also undermine reproductive freedom by using economic coercion to control women’s sexual and childbearing behavior. And attacks on welfare endanger women’s economic independence: Not only do women lose the opportunity to



Under Attack, Fighting Back: Women and Welfare in the United States
By Mimi Abramovitz
Cornerstone Books/
Monthly Review Press
160 pp., \$13

Choosing to Lead: Women and the Crisis of American Values
By Constance H. Buchanan
Beacon Press
276 pp., \$25

use welfare as an escape route from poverty, but fewer jobs are available to them because of cutbacks in the social service sector, which traditionally employs mainly women. Still, Abramovitz's claim that all women are hurt by welfare reform seems somewhat overblown; attacks on welfare most directly harm low-wage workers—male and female alike—and women with children.

Neatly summarizing feminist theory, Abramovitz describes what she calls the “gendered welfare state,” constructed along gender as well as class lines. Considering only its class dimensions, some traditional Marxists denounced welfare as capitalism's self-protective Faustian bargain with the poor. Feminist analyses, however, reveal welfare's “emancipatory possibilities” for women—for all its flaws, welfare is often the only way that women can free themselves from abusive male partners and exploitative employers.

Under Attack, Fighting Back ends with a compendium of activist efforts by and on behalf of poor women. Abramovitz is dismissive of the Depression-era middle-class reformers who helped establish the welfare state; she concludes that “regardless of the reformers' intent ... it is generally agreed that they helped create highly gendered notions of women's citizenship on the one hand, and deepened the state's involvement in the private lives of less privileged women on the other.” Yet the reformers helped found the very system Abramovitz is now fighting so hard to protect; surely they deserve some credit for their efforts. One also wonders whether the reformers should be held responsible for inventing gendered notions of women's citizenship. The ideology of true womanhood consigned women to the domestic sphere long before the creation of the welfare state; the reformers simply deployed their own presumed domestic authority to political advantage.

Abramovitz reserves her enthusiasm for poor women's protests. She revels in their potentially revolutionary challenges to authority—from the turn-of-the-century boycotts of overpriced kosher meat markets to the small but valiant demonstrations of today. Urging women to take to the streets, Abramovitz concludes by quoting Frederick Douglass: “Power concedes nothing without demand.”

In *Choosing to Lead*, Constance Buchanan also urges women to act, but her vision of female leadership sounds more like sermons and tea sandwiches than womanning the barricades. The Harvard Divinity School professor argues that women must reclaim their tradition of moral authority in order to restructure American society. Wistfully recalling the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and settlement house reformers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, she argues that those advocates of yore successfully combined a social welfare sensibility with a commitment to women's equal rights. Women today, she says, must learn from their example.

The reformers Buchanan admires deserve credit for their accomplishments, but it's hard to cast them as lead players in the struggle for women's rights. A good number opposed

suffrage, claiming that they would be “better citizens without the ballot” because the vote would taint their powers of moral suasion. Early 20th-century reformers also led the first fights against the Equal Rights Amendment; they feared the ERA would overturn hard-won, gender-specific laws protecting women from hazardous work conditions. And while it's true that during the 1880s Frances Willard convinced the Woman's Christian Temperance Union to join women's suffrage ranks “for the protection of the home,” the ultra-domestic WCTU was scarcely in the women's rights vanguard.

Buchanan's favored reformers were social welfare advocates. While some of these were active in the campaign for women's rights, the feminist and social welfare movements were not the same, nor were their agendas entirely compatible. To the extent that social welfare reformers claimed moral authority based on the selflessness of their concerns, they subverted the feminist position that women, as human beings, have the right to speak out on their own behalf. By urging compassion for the suffering poor, the reformers also objectified poor women and short-circuited discussion of a right to subsistence. By linking their authority to women's concern for home and family, they gained mainstream support for significant social change—but in the process, they reinforced a degraded and sentimental concept of women's role.

Arguably, Buchanan does the same. While she takes pains to distinguish herself from “difference” feminists, she too thinks women are special—possessed of an “acute awareness” of others. Her claim for women's moral authority, based on women's care for others, feeds into a backlash that condemns rights-based feminism as selfish. Indeed, Buchanan repeatedly blames equal rights feminists for the problems of society at large. For example, she implies that feminists are to blame for the devaluation of women's unpaid work: If they would only accord motherhood and domesticity proper respect, the status of women's unpaid work would be elevated, and businesses would be shamed into subsidizing family life. It never occurs to her that women's unpaid work is devalued precisely because it's unpaid. In our money-conscious society, one presumed gets what one pays for.

Though Abramovitz and Buchanan differ sharply in their response to the middle-class reformers of yesteryear, both imply that social welfare advocacy is properly “women's work.” Their appeals to women create the risk that even progressives will relegate welfare issues to a gender ghetto, reserved for suffering poor women and children, and the women who care about them. This gender-based approach to welfare stereotypes women, trivializes the significance of welfare to men, and, most important, diverts discussion away from the baseline protections a civilized society owes all its members, male and female. Until progressives defend welfare as a human right, we will continue to concede to conservatives the terms of the social contract. ◀

Phyllis Eckhaus is a Brooklyn-based writer.

Papa don't preach

By Kim Phillips

The consensus is in on teen pregnancy: It's single-handedly responsible for the decline of Western civilization. Charles Murray was the first to sound the alarm in an acclaimed 1993 *Wall Street Journal* editorial that declared that "illegitimacy is the single most important social problem of our time—more important than crime, drugs, poverty, illiteracy, welfare or homelessness, because it drives everything else." California Gov. Pete Wilson concurred: "All of the problems tearing apart the fabric of our society have deep roots in the exploding epidemic of out-of-wedlock births." Jesse Jackson put in his two cents: "Babies having babies is morally wrong." And Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala chimed in: "I don't like to put this in moral terms. But I do believe that having children out of wedlock is just wrong." President Clinton claimed in his 1995 State of the Union Address that "the epidemic of teen pregnancies and births where there is no marriage is our most serious social problem," and his domestic policy adviser William Galston declared an "all-out cultural war" against teen pregnancy.

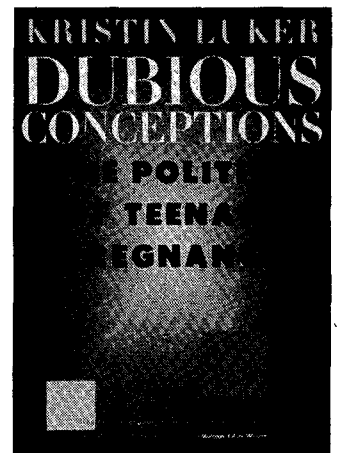
In the midst of so much sanctimony and hyperbole, one might be tempted to ignore a book on teen pregnancy entitled *Dubious Conceptions*—but this would be a mistake. Kristin Luker's new book offers a clearly written, much-needed survey of the recent academic literature on teenage motherhood, as well as an insightful overview of historical attitudes toward early childbearing and single mothers. She does such an effective job of exposing the sloppy scholarship and political calculations driving the debate on teen pregnancy that by the end of the book, the reader is left somewhat mystified: If teen pregnancy is neither new nor responsible for the ills attributed to it, why does the issue resonate with so many people?

The transparency of the teen pregnancy "discourse" becomes clear to anyone who does what Luker does in her book: skip the moralizing and look at the facts about teenage motherhood. Summarizing recent academic research and compiling some statistical data of her own, Luker demonstrates pretty convincingly that the widespread argument that teen pregnancy is the catalyst for deepening inner-city poverty has no basis in reality. First of all, the reports of

an "epidemic" of teen births have been wildly exaggerated. Historically, shifts in fertility rates among teenagers have closely matched those among other age groups: They decreased during the 1930s, sharply increased during the 1950s, and declined steadily during the '70s and '80s, the same years when "teen pregnancy" became the byword for black poverty. The birthrate among black teenagers is much higher than that among white teens, but this has been true for the entire century. In fact, during the '80s the birthrate among black teens decreased slightly, while the birthrate among white teens went up. Most teen mothers aren't Jesse Jackson's "babies having babies"; the overwhelming majority of them are women in their late teens, and only a tiny fraction—2 percent—are women under 15. Birthrates for these youngest women have remained more or less stable over the past 70 years. The conclusion is obvious: Teenage motherhood is nothing new.

Much of the academic research purporting to show that teen parenthood leads to welfare dependency, criminal behavior, low birth weights and (plug your favorite social problem in here) is equally groundless, mainly because researchers have tended to compare teenage mothers to the general population instead of to women of the same socioeconomic class. Eighty percent of the women who become teenage mothers grow up poor; obviously no one would quibble with the idea that poor people are more likely to use welfare. The same confusion of correlation with causality vitiates most other claims about the high costs of teenage pregnancy. For example, it's true that babies born to teen mothers have lower birth weights than those born to older women, and that teens are more likely than adults to experience complications in pregnancy and childbirth. But this is not because they are young, but because—like poor women of all ages—they lack adequate medical care during pregnancy. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, about a third of all pregnant teens lack adequate prenatal care, as opposed to only about 15 percent of pregnant women in general. In Western Europe, where prenatal care is universally available, teen mothers have fewer complications in pregnancy than older women.

When it comes to completing high school, social class—rather than the simple fact of having given birth as a teen—again seems to be the decisive factor. (Never mind that in the good old days, pregnant teenagers were forbidden to attend



**Dubious Conceptions:
The Politics of
Teenage Pregnancy**
By Kristin Luker
Harvard University Press
283 pp., \$24.95

school, on the grounds that their presence would corrupt the morals of the nice girls.) One study Luker cites showed that while only 55 percent of all teenage mothers received high school diplomas, nearly 75 percent of the ones who were middle class did. Speaking from personal experience, at the University of Chicago I knew one wealthy girl who had given birth at age 18; her parents bought her an apartment in a co-op and paid for a full-time live-in nanny, and she's now on her way to medical school.

Researchers who compare teen mothers to women of the same economic background find few differences between teen mothers and women in the control population. Studies by psychologist Arline Geronimus of pairs of sisters, one of whom became a mother as a teen and one of whom didn't, showed that the sisters had about equal chances of graduating from high school. And work done by sociologist Joseph Hotz comparing teen mothers to women who miscarried as teenagers found that the teen mothers actually had higher rates of employment and made more money than the women who waited to have children; he hypothesized that this might be because low-end jobs emphasize seniority rather than credentials, and taking time off work to have children in your 20s sets you back on the pay scale. In other words, having children as a teenager is a strategy for dealing with being poor; if you're not poor to begin with, you and the baby will probably muddle through fine, and if you start out poor, waiting to have kids won't do you much good.

As Luker debunks myth after myth about teen pregnancy, public policy purporting to deal with the issue seems increasingly ludicrous. For example, Luker argues that we should have seen an explosion of teen births over the past 25 years, as more teenagers have become sexually active at earlier ages. The fact that the teen birthrate has actually decreased over this time period can be chalked up to the success of family planning clinics, many of which are publicly funded, in dispensing low-cost or free birth control to adolescents. What has been the reward for publicly funded contraceptive programs, arguably the single most successful check on teenage pregnancy? Reductions in funding all through the '80s. Making abortion accessible to teenagers is another tried-and-true means of keeping them from becoming mothers; before *Roe v. Wade*, three-quarters of all pregnant teens gave birth, but after the legalization of abortion, the proportion fell to one half. The result? Parental notification forms and the federal government's refusal to pay for the abortions of poor women. Overall, public policy on teen pregnancy has probably *increased* the number of births to teenage mothers.

When a social calamity is invented in complete defiance of the evidence, and when the measures supposedly intended to combat it in fact have the opposite

effect, one can't help wondering if something different is really at stake. Unfortunately, for all its thoroughness in debunking the myths surrounding teen pregnancy, *Dubious Conceptions* doesn't give a satisfactory explanation of what more rational anxieties might underlie the hysteria. But it's not hard to come up with one. As a symbol, teenage motherhood derives much of its power from the suggestion of reversed family roles: a child taking the place of a parent, a little girl with the sexuality of an adult. But the real target of the hostility toward the teenage mother is the woman she will become: likely to be single, to raise her kids alone or with other women, to rely on something besides a husband for a steady source of income. If teen mothers would only get married, no one would care about their tender age at first birth. After all, for Charles Murray the real test of welfare reform isn't the number of women who get off the rolls by going to work but whether the rate of out-of-wedlock births declines.

A thorough treatment of teen pregnancy would have to focus explicitly on several major changes in family organization during the course of this century. First of all, even before World War I, the family had ceased to be the central productive unit; the number of people working in family businesses has declined throughout the century, and the family farm is so irrelevant that the Census Bureau has stopped keeping statistics on the farming population. Over the past century, women's participation in the labor force has dramatically increased; today, about 60 percent of the female population works for wages. Second, with the exception of an upward blip in the wake of World War II, birthrates have declined steadily, and are now the lowest they've ever been in the nation's history. Meanwhile, fewer people have been getting married and more of them have been getting divorced. The result is that families are smaller and less stable today than at any point in the country's past. Third, there are more single mothers today than ever before; the proportion of births to single women tripled between 1970 and 1990, rising from 10 to nearly 30 percent. Trends in Europe are remarkably similar. The majority of Americans still get married (though in countries like Sweden this is no longer the case), and the two-parent family is, of course, far from obsolete. But as a central organizing principle of society, the two-

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parent family's days are clearly numbered. Increasingly, it is simply one option among many.

It shouldn't be surprising that for many people this is a frightening development. Sociologists have observed that people turn to ethnic solidarities or family loyalties—indissoluble bonds with the authority of blood—when society and the state can't be depended on for support, for example when migrating to a new country or in times of economic hardship. *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn quoted a disgruntled worker a couple of months ago who supposedly responded to a sectarian denunciation of the nuclear family with the pithy statement, "The family's all we've got, man." But one might say that that's exactly the problem—poor and working people in this country don't have anything *but* the family to help care for young children, to pay hospital bills, to pass along word of a job, to provide for education, to give protection in old age. In a country without a decent social safety net, many people will, not unreasonably, see anything that tends to undermine the nuclear family as a threat to their well-being. The rich get their investment portfolios, and workers can have the family.

In a sense, it's ironic that the anti-welfare crowd uses the rhetoric of a "lifetime of dependency." The social worker may be an unsympathetic bureaucrat, but he won't try to hit you, or spend the money for food on alcohol, or refuse to allow you any role in family finances. People may be good or bad, but dependence on a single individual means relying on grace or whim for your most basic needs and giving up a vast measure of control over your life. Christopher Lasch enthusiasts to the contrary, the creation of a strong welfare

state doesn't mean the dissolution of personal ties, or the intrusion of the state into all aspects of intimate life; people still bring each other flowers in Sweden, and parents still love their children. But it does remove some of the potential for violence and coercion from familial relationships by ensuring that while people may form all kinds of affective bonds and psychological ties, some other source will at least guarantee their material well-being.

Certainly the young women in Luker's study, while expressing real love for their children and an occasional wistful longing for a husband and a house with a white picket fence, have good reasons for not wanting to marry the fathers of their children. As one young woman said, "He's a child. He whines. He expects people to do things for him. He's nasty to me. He doesn't like to do dishes and he thinks I'm supposed to do them all for him. He likes to sleep and watch TV. He likes people to cook for him, and he irritates me. No, I would not marry him. He acts like a baby and I have two of my own." A striking aspect of recent accounts of young men growing up in the inner city—like *Makes Me Wanna Holler* by Nathan McCall and *In Search of Respect* by Philippe Bourgois—is the premium poor young men place on "being a man." What

this means in practice is a public display of contempt for women; not incidentally, both books contain graphic descriptions of gang rape and domestic violence. Not, of course, that gang rape, grotesque macho rituals, and a desire to have women act as domestic and emotional servants are pathologies of the inner city—rich white frat boys act just the same way. One of the biggest problems many young mothers face isn't the absence of a husband—it's a history of relationships with men who are violent, abusive, or simply more of a hassle than a help to have around.

At times, Luker expresses surprise that liberals and conservatives alike upbraid and abuse teen mothers. From her point of view, young mothers have unfairly been made scapegoats for an anxious society, whipping girls and poster children for end-of-century anomie. After all, aren't young women having babies doing just as they've always done, choosing family over self, putting faith in love rather than in cold, calculating reason? The difficulties teens face as parents aren't intrinsic to early birth, but are the problems of any poor mother—even, in some ways, of any working mother. Why, then, should anyone single them out? But if you listen to the young women in Luker's book—nervous, courageous, standing alone—the anger of the conservatives and the anxiety of the liberals make perfect sense: One of the pillars of bourgeois society is crumbling. Short of massive retrenchment—never out of the question—the "traditional two-parent family joined by marriage" mourned by Alan Keyes won't go back to reigning unquestioned and triumphant anytime soon. So much the better for us all. ◀

Kim Phillips is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

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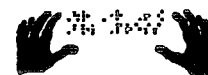
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Continued from page 40

Dear ITT Ideologist,

I just lost a great job as adviser to an important Washington official. I'm having a dog of a time finding a new one because of difficulties with my résumé. Watching the GOP and Democratic conventions, I couldn't help but notice that both Bob Dole and Hillary Clinton presented résumés to the nation that omitted decades of their doings. Dole portrayed himself as a World War II vet, leaving unmentioned his 35 years in Congress. Clinton described herself as a mother and author, deleting her career as a high-powered corporate attorney. I regard this as heartening since there are certain things in my background that I would rather not acknowledge in a résumé. Do you think I might be able to take advantage of this trend?

—R. Morris, Redding, CT

Dear Mr. Morris,

Good news. Given the current vector of values, any embarrassing event having occurred more than five minutes previously will soon be treated as history, toast, dead meat. So hang on.

Though my ideological services are usually free, I am making an exception by charging you \$200 for the above advice. Please leave it on the dresser on your way out.

Dear ITT Ideologist,

I always thought that conservatives believe we have too many laws regulating business here in America. Now I see that they are busy making laws regulating business in other countries. How come?

—Lacey Fair, Enterprise, PA

Dear Ms. Fair,

I imagine you're referring to the Helms-Burton and D'Amato bills signed by Bill Clinton to control the foreign trade of foreign countries. These laws tell Italians, for instance, that they'll have to stop getting their oil from near-by Libya, and forbid Canadians from enjoying Cuban sun-tans.

We have two factors at work here. First is the trend toward globalization. In America, everything is a commodity. Therefore, it's hardly surprising that we're now exporting laws as if they were jobs or movies. Next we can expect our conservatives to ship English-only laws to the countries that persist in speaking in alien tongues and anti-sex laws to libertine lands like Sweden and France. As Atlanta demonstrated, we could certainly use a law banning foreigners from the Olympic Games.

The other factor is raw power. The world is now doing its business under the rules of GATT, NAFTA and similar trade pacts promoted by the U.S. government. As the global boss of bosses, Washington has an obligation to stringently enforce these rules for others while flagrantly breaking

them itself, on the principle that super—or any other—power is truly enjoyable only when it is exercised arbitrarily, unfairly and arrogantly.

It strikes me that, apart from their prosaic and corrupt benefit to particular businesses, the Helms-Burton and D'Amato laws are fingers in the wind meant to gauge the current level of our super-poweredness. At the moment, we have no suitable foreign flanks to flay in a short and neat war that would underline our writ. About all we can do is fling a few cruise missiles at Iraq over the heads of our appalled allies.

Capitalism, once our strong suit, has turned so multinational that an offshore banking haven like the Cayman Islands may soon be the second or third greatest economic power on earth. Thus there is no clear way of asserting the superiority of our Yankee entrepreneurship.

What's left then is brass and fiat—arbitrarily and illegally demanding that our allies and clients sacrifice their interests to our own. But, most likely, they will soon resent us enough to retaliate instead. When that happens, it will be more proof that we have become not just the world's only superpower but its loneliest too.

Dear ITT Ideologist,

What's the word?

—Moe Just, Parole, PA

Dear Mr. Just,

In a word, it's terrorism. Even soundbites are just too taxing for dumbed-down America. We like single-word explanations for untoward global events. For many years, "communism" sufficed. Folks nodded assent whenever Ronald Reagan opined that there wouldn't be any trouble in the world without it.

Communism disappeared but troubles remain. Terrorism is the new explanation. Don't bother to look it up in the dictionary. Like communism before it, terrorism has been stripped of its original meaning and now serves as an all-purpose pejorative.

For years, the U.N. tried to come up with a definition of terrorism that would please everybody. The only thing that everybody agreed upon was that terrorism was an attack on civilians. Evidently, everyone no longer agrees on that. Attacks on U.S. soldiers that once would have been described as commando raids or suicide missions are now labeled terrorist by Washington and the media.

My definition, gleaned from careful study of how the powers that be use the word, is that terrorism is the unsanctioned use of inferior weapons. This, of course, harks back to the short, brilliant description of terrorism in the classic 1965 film *The Battle of Algiers*. A French army interrogator asks an Algerian prisoner how he can justify leaving bombs in shopping bags at sidewalk cafes. You give us your warplanes, replies the prisoner, and you can have our shopping bags.

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By Pete Karman

Dear ITT Ideologist,

Like everyone else in the country, except for a few people on Wall Street and in Washington, I was absent from school on the day the teacher explained why rich people don't have enough money and poor people have too much. Since this is apparently the basis of our economic policy, I was hoping that you might give me a word-bite of explication.

—John Marshall Adam, Smithtown, NY

Dear Mr. Adam,

Let me for a moment don my economist's cap and thus join the ranks of those learned individuals who by virtue of rigorous training and above-normal mental endowments are

able to perform such useful feats as, say, estimating PIN numbers for people who have forgotten theirs. The lesson that you missed that day in school is that money, unlike Chiclets or Madonna's lovers, is not as fungible as it appears. You might think that one dollar is as good as another. But the fact is that bucks in the banks of the wealthy are, for reasons carefully determined by the science of public relations, far better than coins in the clutches of the lesser classes.

For example, a poor man sitting on a stoop all day is obviously not working. If he gets a job, he works for his money. But a rich man idling at a poolside chaise can be said to have his money working for him. Obviously, money that works for you, otherwise known as capital, is superior to money for which you must work, otherwise known as wages. This superiority of capital-type money over wage-type money is why we call our country a capitalist's rather than a worker's paradise.

The poor have little or none of this better kind of money. Their moolah, whether it comes from jobs, welfare or unofficial sources, is by definition of the inferior sort. It is a truism that bad money drives out the good. That's why it's proper for the poor to have as little of their paltry pelf as possible lest it contaminate the superior swag of the swells.

Thus the collectors of good money—big corporations, landlords, convenience stores, check-cashing stations, dope and whiskey drummers, loan sharks, sneaker manufacturers and the like—have long maintained programs to keep the poor on the shy side of the spondulicks sweepstakes.

Lately, they have managed to enlist the federal government in these efforts. President Clinton has signed a bill cutting off welfare for those poor folks who fail to turn out for nonexistent jobs. Since employers pay no inferior wage-type money for nonexistent jobs, they can concentrate on increasing their accumulation of superior capital-type money. I hope this answers your query.

Continued on page 39

